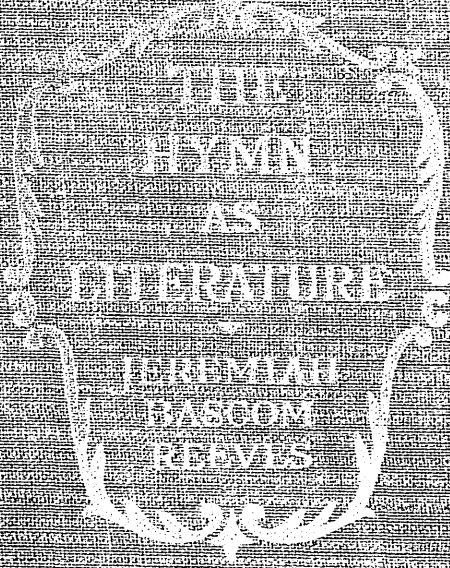

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THE HYMN AS LITERATURE

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BY

JEREMIAH BASCOM REEVES, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, WESTMINSTER COLLEGE



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New York and London

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699008

To

RICHARD EARLY REEVES

AND TO

LILLIAN REEVES WYATT

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

The hymn as the most ancient type of literature and as a most pervasive and powerful kind of poetry has not had its just dues from the critics. They have not so much frowned upon the hymn as they have given it a sort of deferential toleration, exempting it from its liabilities as well as its rights in the realm of letters. Of the scores of books about hymns not one, so far as I know, has sought definitely to bound and describe the hymn as the small but rich province of poetry that it is.

The student of the hymn must own his obligation to John Julian's great "Dictionary of Hymnology" and to such other authorities as Duffield, Miller, and Brownlie, as well as to the excellent work of Dr. Benson, Dr. Breed, Dr. Nutter and Dr. Tillett, Mr. Price, Mr. Ninde and others.

This book began as a task and grew into rather an enthusiasm. I owe many thanks to Professors J. Q. Adams, Clark S. Northup, F. C. Prescott of Cornell University, and especially to Professor Martin W. Sampson, a critic kind, severe, and inspiring.

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THE
HYMN AS LITERATURE

THE HYMN AS LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE HYMN

IT is remarkable that English literary criticism has given so little attention to a form of literature that holds so large a place in the attention of the people as does the hymn. For the hymn is the most popular kind of English poetry. If this appear to be an immoderate statement, let the objector find and bring forward another type of poetry that is read so frequently by so many people and, at least apparently, with so much approval. If one should count the number of persons in any English-speaking town who had read epic poetry during the last week, or who had read dramatic poetry, or, excepting one book, who had read fifty lines of lyrical poetry, he would find the number relatively quite small. But last week in a small American city there were thirty-seven hundred persons who read or went over at least three hymns. That there were three times thirty-seven hundred readings of lyrical poetry by the people of a typical small community in the ordinary course of its affairs in one

week is a fact of real significance to the student of American life and literature.

To remember that this popular esteem accorded the hymn extends throughout all countries where the English language is spoken, is to be assured that verse is alive and powerful in the world to-day.

It is a fact that the largest single edition of any merchantable book in the United States up to 1912 was the first edition of a volume of lyrical verse, a hymn-book. And the enormous first edition of that book was followed in the same year by two other printings. Between July, 1905, and December, 1920, it had passed through thirty-two printings. The sale of this book, according to a statement by the publishers, has been something over two million copies. It should be remarked that this is but one book of but one branch of the Christian church in the United States. In England there is a single collection of hymns that has far outdistanced this; before the beginning of the World War it had reached an output of no fewer than sixty million copies. These two collections, the English "Hymns Ancient and Modern" and the American "Methodist Hymnal," are of course by no means all of the hymn-books; they are but two among hundreds of similar collections. In this country the "Methodist Hymnal," although it is the largest in point of numbers issued, has many great companions in the field. The Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Protestant Epis-

copal hymn-books are notable for the extent of their circulation. There are many other hymnals issued by various branches of the church, as for example, the Friends and the Unitarians. The Roman Catholics have a number of good books of English hymns.

Besides these there are several standard hymnals issued by great publishing houses, which have wide circulation. The Anglican "Hymns Ancient and Modern," vastly as it is distributed, is not an official hymn-book of the Church of England; there are scores of other Church of England hymn-books. In the British Isles, besides these, there are many great hymnals, great both in quality and in point of wide distribution, issued by the Irish, Scottish, Roman Catholic, and Non-Conforming churches. It is much the same in Canada, South Africa, and Australasia. The English hymn holds wide sway wherever the English language is spoken.

Of smaller general distribution than those just mentioned, yet mounting into enormous numbers, are the hymn-books of particular religious societies and minor independent organizations. One of the Mormon hymn-books, for example, is now in its twenty-fifth edition, the editions having been of ten thousand volumes each. There is a small religious body, made up originally from Swiss, German, and Dutch immigrants, called Mennonites. This comparatively minute branch of the church has issued, according to information received from its publishing house, about two hundred thousand copies. A collection of songs, mainly ephemeral and not al-

ways innocuous, is printed endlessly; this type of book would hardly be mentioned here did it not almost invariably include a number of the worthy hymns without which it could not well stand alone. Astonishingly large numbers of hymn-books are brought out by standard publishing houses. One of these, "The American Hymnal," containing 726 hymns, has had a sale of nearly one hundred thousand copies; another, "The Army and Navy Hymnal," is in use in every camp, on every ship, and in every naval station of the United States. Another, "Hymns of Worship and Service," has had an output of well over half a million copies. Another, "Hymnal for American Youth," sells at the rate of fifty thousand copies a year. This last is a book designed for young persons, containing 342 lyrics; it is but one of the twenty-two hymn-books published by a single publishing house. It should be noted, too, that none of these are pamphlets or anything less than standard full-cloth octavo books selling at standard prices. Details like these indicate a wide popularity for the hymn-book.

By the term "hymn-book" as it is used throughout this volume is meant no particular compilation of hymns, but that *corpus* of religious lyrical verse selected by a remarkably distinct consensus of taste, and constituting, with slight variations, the body of every good collection.

The hymn itself may be defined as a lyrical composition expressive of religious aspiration, petition,

confession, communion, or praise; a song devoted to the fellowship of souls and the worship of God. In its broader sense the term includes canticles, psalms, carols, "spirituals," and chants; in its more limited sense it includes only religious lyrics in rime and meter—in a style of very definite and narrow restrictions. The good hymn combines in quite remarkable effect the straitest simplicity, clarity, dignity, and melody, rich ideas about the basic matters of life and death, with strong emotion under sure control.

It seems safe to state without any reservations that this type, of all forms of English poetry to-day, stands first in popular favor. The hymn-book—the fairly uniform compilation of the standard hymns of the English language—is published and sold to an extent not approached by the publications of any other types of poetry.

And the hymn-book does not merely reach an enormous printing; it is actually opened and read more often than any other book of poetry. This fact becomes more apparent as one endeavors to call to mind other books of verse that begin to rival the hymn-book in this respect. Further, when verses from the hymn-books are being used it is not infrequent that two persons are reading the same page at the same time, while others may be repeating the lyric from memory without any book—as Lincoln and Roosevelt are said usually to have done. Of course many persons may read more often from Shakspere or Byron or Edgar Guest;

some may never open a hymn-book. The statement here is that among English-speaking people generally, the sum of times that the hymn-book is taken up and read is larger than the sum of times that any other book of poetry is read.

This sway of the religious song in the lives of American people is not a new thing; the hymn has maintained a lyrical regnancy continuously and from the very first. And the hymn, though essentially deep-moving and intimate, has nevertheless exerted its power at times in a quite regal and dramatic manner.

It is with an outburst of religious song that the curtain goes up on the whole drama of America. American history opens with the singing of a Christian hymn. On the evening of September 25, 1492, one of the companions of Columbus saw what he thought to be land lying dimly in the west. Though it was not America yet, still, over those strange waters rang out the first greeting to America. From all three of the ships, as Columbus himself gives the account in his diary, there rose the sound of the old "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." Then later, on Friday night, October 12, when they saw a light glimmering on the shore of the New World, the cry went up, and "Salve Regina" swept out over the water. The Old World was greeting the New World with a hymn.

Again, the first English book printed in the Western hemisphere was the old English hymnal, "The Bay Psalm Book." Spanish Roman Catholic

sailors had come singing hymns; and Anglo-Saxon Puritan settlers sent back a hymn-book, the first literary offering of the New World to the Old. It is worth noting that the offering was well received. It afterward went through many English editions. Of course the hymns sung on Columbus's ships were in Latin, and the songs of the New England book were rough-hewn translations of the Psalms into English verse, but they were all, in the broader sense of the word, true hymns.

The great Northwest was opened to civilization and claimed for France with the singing of hymns. And La Salle, discovering the mouth of the Mississippi River, stood on the bank and claimed all the vast region for France in a ceremony marked by the singing of three hymns.

By the New Englanders' firesides, at their social gatherings, and on their austere Sabbaths, the hymns, or metrical psalms, held a large place; and the emotions and ideals which these lyrics bore could not but enter into the fiber of the people's lives.

Along the Atlantic coast the Indians could hear from the clearings of the white men, mingled with sounds of cattle and barn-yard fowl and busy ax, here and there from women at their work, from families in their cabins at night, from gatherings in groves and log meeting-houses, the sound of hymns. And there were Indians who learned to sing them. A letter, for example, to Sir William Ashurst from New England describes the Indians' "excellent

singing the Psalms with most ravishing melody." It did not take the Southern slaves long to learn their masters' hymns and to make sweet and plaintive ones of their own. No one can guess how much the American negro's hymns have meant to him in making for consolation and piety and virtue. They have played, and still play, a large part in his life.

Scattered details here and there in the records of past American life indicate even to the casual reader how intimately religious lyrical verse entered into that life. "The Bay Psalm Book" was printed in the modest dwelling of the first president of Harvard. President Dwight of Yale, chaplain-general of the Revolutionary Army, edited and partly wrote what was for years the leading hymn- and psalm-book in the country. President Davies of Princeton was in his day a leading American hymn-writer.

In 1737, at Charlestown, South Carolina, a young Oxford graduate, John Wesley, Anglican priest, chaplain to Oglethorpe, and missionary to the Indians, published the first real hymn-book—as distinguished from the metrical psalm-book—of the Church of England. Thus in America began the sequence of great English hymn-books.

Among the earliest extant writing in the hand of George Washington is the transcription of a hymn.[1] Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were warmly interested in hymns. In their correspond-

[1] Jared Sparks, "Life and Writings of Washington," Vol. XII, p. 299. Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, 1855.

ence, after they had retired from Washington, the two old chieftains carried on a discussion of hymnody. They seemed to agree upon the Psalms as the greatest of all lyrical poetry. In a letter of advice to young Isaac Englebrecht, Jefferson transcribed Tate and Brady's version of the fifteenth Psalm, "knowing," he says, "nothing more moral, more sublime, more worthy of your preservation."

Benjamin Franklin was particularly fond of the lyrics of Isaac Watts. The first book issued from Franklin's press in Philadelphia was an edition of Watts's "Psalms and Hymns." To a friend, Mrs. Newsom, when she visited him during his last hours, he quoted several of the lyrics of Watts, "discoursing at length upon their sublimity." Joel Barlow, poet of the Revolution, and later minister to France, was a writer of hymns and editor of a notable American hymn-book. John Quincy Adams translated the whole Book of Psalms into English verse, besides writing the large number of hymns in his "Poems of Religion and Society."

The hymn is so much interwoven in the fabric of our past and present that it seems gratuitous to mention instances of the use of hymnody in familiar life. One must leave to the imagination, and to intimate recollections, evaluation of the worth of the hymn as a force in strengthening ties of fellowship and of sanctity, in giving voice to the otherwise unuttered grief or desire, and in bearing to those in need of it consolation and hope and courage.

One might go on with innumerable details indi-

cating the influence of these lyrics in American life. For example, Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written in a dark hour of the Civil War, and spreading through the camps and marches like fire, was worth to the Northern cause possibly more than train-loads of corn and ammunition could have been in its place. Lincoln was so moved by it that he broke into tears at the public singing of it. Lee, on the other side, was finding in the old hymn, "How Firm a Foundation," something of strength and comfort to help him. When Abraham Lincoln died, the people throughout the North sang the hymns that he had found helpful in his life. Nor is it without significance that many thousands of persons sang together all over the land as memorials to Garfield and McKinley, and later to Roosevelt, and to Harding, the hymns that these men had loved.

Such glimpses as the foregoing indicate that the small type of lyrical poetry called the hymn has had a good deal to do, first and last, with the ideas and emotions of the people of the continent.

The same may be said of the hymns in English life. The first literature written on English soil is, so far as we know, a religious lyric, Cædmon's Hymn. The missionaries who went to England with St. Augustine marched in a procession, singing hymns, up the strand to where King Ethelbert sat waiting to receive them. The king gave them a home in Canterbury, which town they entered, according to Bede, singing a litany. St. Patrick and his followers approached the old druids and hostile chiefs

singing hymns. Among the works of Bede was "A Book of Hymns in Divers Sorts of Meter and Rhythm." There are throngs of incidents in early English lore indicating the part of hymnody in the life of the people. Bede tells, for example, of the famous "Halleluiah victory" of Germanicus over the Saxons and Picts wherein by a "universal shouting of Halleluiah" they put the enemy to rout. King Alfred was so attached to his hymn-book that he would go nowhere, not even hunting, without it. Henry VIII, Elizabeth, Mary Stuart, and James I were authors of hymns. So we may glance down over the hymns of the Wesleys and the hymns of the Oxford Movement and on down to the singing of "O God Our Help in Ages Past" by the English at the burial of their Unknown Soldier at the close of the World War.

An indication of the influence of the hymn in Scottish life may be found in Burns's portrayal in "The Cotter's Saturday Night"; and Robert Burns knew the heart of Scotland.

> They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
> They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
> Perhaps "Dundee's" wild warbling measures rise,
> Or Plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
> Or noble "Elgin" beets the heavenward flame,
> The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays. . . .
> From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs
> That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.

Hymnody constitutes a part, not only of English literature, but of all literature. Rich as the English

language is in hymns, it can claim no preëminence or priority in the devotional lyric. There were hymns before there were hieroglyphics. Historically, the human race was up and singing before sunrise. Literature itself first appears coming up out of the old forests with priestly chants. Practically every literature seems to have had its beginning in hymnic song and chant. The first piece of French writing extant, except for a bit of tabulation, the "Sentiments de Strasbourg," is a hymn. Charlemagne, like Ambrose and Gregory and Alfred the Great, established schools for the teaching of hymn singing. The first trace of Greek literature is hymnic. The story of Tyrtæus, whether one reads it as myth or fact, gives a glimpse of the early Grecian hymn, and its lyric power to awaken and transfigure popular sentiment. The Athenians, bidden by the oracle to send a leader to the Spartans, sent in guile, as the one man of Athens likely to be of least service to the rival city, Tyrtæus, a crippled school-teacher. But their guile misled them: the crippled school-teacher taught the Spartans and their children hymns of the gods and songs of human duty and destiny which so filled their minds with just ideas and fired their souls with brave and noble purpose as to reform the state of Sparta.

The type reached a marvelous state of perfection early in the life of the Hebrew people. Their greatest artistic expression was their lyrics of religion. And they sang them with a will. The hymn singing of Mount Zion could be heard twelve miles away.

Their collections of psalms, begun in their early recorded life, enjoy to-day an enormous popular favor even translated into modern languages, and they have been an incalculably powerful influence in forming the taste and ideals of the Western nations. "With a psalm," says Prothero, in his "Psalms in Human Life," "we are baptized, married, and buried." In this connection he quotes Heine as saying that in the Book of Psalms are collected the "sunrise and sunset, birth and death, promise and fulfillment—the whole drama of humanity." These early hymns have strangely permeated European civilized life since Christianity brought them into Europe. To-day the English-speaking school-boy who does not know by heart some of this ancient hymnic poetry is rightly considered ignorant and neglected.

The early Christian centuries echo with Greek and Latin hymns. Medieval literature comes to its flower in its religious songs. Some of them are vigorously alive to-day. The "Dies Iræ" is an example; Philip Schaff thought it beyond doubt the greatest song in the world. Lockhart says that Sir Walter Scott was murmuring its lines as he lay dying. Dr. Samuel Johnson could never repeat it, Mrs. Thrale says, without tears. This medieval hymn has been published, up to 1910, in more than 137 modern English translations. Few other productions of the Latin language have seen so many published English renderings.

If hymnody flourished in medieval Latin, it has

found even more genial and fertile soil in the Teutonic languages. The German hymn is a form of poetry deeply rooted in popular favor, noble in its aim, and soundly artistic within its scope.

It is true that only in late years has the indigenous religious lyric reached the established place in English poetry that it holds in the German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew literatures. It had to struggle against the strongly intrenched "Psalms in Meter" and to overcome some very strong and peculiar prejudices before it came fully to its own. Yet from the time that English literature, like most other literatures, opens its story with a hymn, the type of poem has held its place and performed its incalculably useful service in English life and literature.

A book of hymns issued in 1549, and revised and added to, saw by 1828 more than six hundred editions. This book, entitled originally "Certayne Psalms chosen out of the Ebrewe by Thomas Sternhold," later known as "Sternhold and Hopkins," far surpassed in circulation all other English books except the Bible and the Prayer-Book. The translation, made conjointly by thirty American scholars, of the Psalms from Hebrew into verse—"The Bay Psalm Book," Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1640—was reprinted in 1647 and saw at least twenty printings in England and six in Scotland. These hymns, however, were translations. As has been said, English literature was late in producing its own indigenous hymnody. The English people were long content with Latin hymns and the various

translations of the Hebrew hymnody. But since the eighteenth century the writing and appreciation of hymns has grown till the type has become more and more an element of our poetic wealth. Its recognition as a province of the great poetry of the language was for natural reasons slow in coming; but it has come.

Yet to call the hymn poetry is to many minds a new and bold assumption. That this expression of the human spirit has no right to the name of literature is a judgment not confined entirely to persons of a light way of thinking. Certain graver critics, even as they point out that the crowning glory of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was their great, surging hymns, seem to be unaware of the rich strain of religious lyrical poetry in our literature to-day. There is an inclination to fence in what is called "literary lyrics" as if to fence out "singing lyrics." Now there is, of course, a distinction between poems meant to be sung and poems written in the pattern of lyrical poetry but never meant to be sung; but the terminology which classes one kind as literary, thereby implying that the other kind is not of the realm of literature, is inaccurate and unhappy. There may be no objection to saying that lyric poetry not meant to be sung is literature, but objection there is to saying that verses meant to be sung—the true lyrics of the language—are not literature. The religious lyric belongs to the province of poetry none the less because it sets itself to music and is taken up and sung by most of the people.

The literature of the people is not an alien thing, apart from them; it is of course expressed at first by a few elect spokesmen, but after all it is of and for the many. It cannot be deemed estranged and aloof. If to be literary is to be cabined, cribbed, apart from the common mind and heart of the age, the hymn is not literary. But literature is not thus penned up away from the people. It springs forth from the general consciousness as a spring of water issues from the hillside. And it is assigned to its place by the social mind. A single wave of popular favor will not and should not establish any form of expression as literature; but a general and continuous acceptance will establish it. A general and continuous acceptance the hymn has had. True, the fact may indicate to some persons nothing more than an innate religiosity in the Anglo-Saxon mind. However that may be, and however we may limit the term "literature," the English-speaking people do produce largely, read widely, and love profoundly a form of expression called the hymn. If the form does in one way or another sing itself into the consciousness of most people, it may justly be termed lyrical. And if, expressing grave and noble sentiment in a style of marked chasteness and decorum, it is gratifying to the people generally at their more earnest and most elevated moments, there is little gain in arguing that it is not literature.

Still there remains something of a critical tradition that while the hymn in Greek, Latin, and German is excellent poetry, it is in English a poor and

stunted thing. This judgment was virtually true when Addison stated it and himself wrote three good hymns as his contribution to modern English hymnody. It was less true when Johnson repeated the statement. Addison and Johnson themselves differed diametrically in their opinions as to hymnody. Devoted as Addison was to the literature and lore of Greece and Rome, he nevertheless held, in "The Spectator," that the greatest lyrical poetry of ancient times was that of the Psalms. He urged that English poets should turn their efforts more to hymnody. He says:

Most of the works of the pagan poets were either direct hymns to their deities or tended indirectly to the celebration of their respective attributes and perfections. Those who are acquainted with the works of Greek and Latin poets which are still extant will upon reflection find this observation so true that I shall not enlarge upon it. One would wonder that more of our Christian poets have not turned their thoughts this way, especially if we consider that our idea of the Supreme Being is not only infinitely more great and noble than what could possibly enter into the heart of a heathen, but filled with everything that can raise the imagination and give an opportunity for the sublimest thoughts and conceptions.

Johnson, to the contrary, held that it was impossible to write good hymnody. He says in his "Life of Waller":

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men that verse has been too little applied to the purposes of worship, and many attempts have been made to animate de-

votion by pious poetry; that they have very seldom attained their end is sufficiently known, and it may not be improper to inquire why they have miscarried. Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defined in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and grandeur of nature, the flowers of the spring, and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide, and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God. Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

The true path lies somewhere between these extremes. We know that Addison was out of the path if he meant that Poetry must sit in a pew or wear a cowl in order to be in the service and praise of God. All good verses following after truth and beauty are in the service and honor of God. Addison seems to imply that hymns exclusively are "sacred" and the rest of poetry "profane." The world knows better now than to say that all outside the temple gate is profane. Who will say that "Rescue the Perishing" is more to the glory of God than "Lycidas"? But however Addison may

argue over this point, he proves very splendidly part of his contention, that the English language has not enough hymns; he wrote two hymns which still supply an insistent want. He shows that Johnson is wrong, by the best of proof, by doing eminently well what Johnson argued could not be done at all. In the hymn beginning, "The spacious firmament on high," he does "make contemplative piety poetical." And in the hymn, "When All Thy Mercies, O My God," he illustrates how that "poetical" and that "thanksgiving" may be even best in the form of poetry. The Psalms are devoted to "faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication," and they are poetical. It is possible to write good hymns; though it is difficult, and comparatively few have done it.

"Scarcely any one of us ever judges our hymns fairly," said Matthew Arnold in his Oxford lectures on Celtic literature. And in the same paragraph, as if to exemplify this saying, he goes on to say that "so far as poetry is concerned, while 'The Golden Treasury' is a monument of a nation's poetic strength, the 'Book of Praise' [Sir Roundell Palmer's collection of hymns] is a monument to a nation's weakness."

Arnold was here speaking at the climax of his thesis that the Anglo-Saxon spirit is unlawfully married to the Semitic spirit, being divorced from the Indo-European, and specifically, the poetic Celtic spirit.

> And [he says] if—whereas the Semitic genius places its highest spiritual life in the religious sentiment, and makes that the basis of its poetry—the Indo-European genius places its highest spiritual life in the imaginative reason, and makes that the basis of its poetry, we are none the better for wanting the perception to discern a natural law, which is, after all, like every natural law, irresistible; we are none the better for trying to make ourselves Semitic, when nature has made us Indo-European, and to shift the basis of our poetry. We may mean well; all manner of good may follow us on the way we go; but we are not on our right road, the road we must in the end follow.

That, he says, is why our hymns betray a false tendency and "poetry deserts us in our hymns." The great Latin hymns but show that when Indo-Europeans do make religious sentiment the basis of their poetry they must do it in the language that is not alive. "The moment it [poetry] speaks in a living language, and makes itself the organ of the religious sentiment only, as in the German and English hymns, it betrays weakness;—the weakness of false tendency."

The dictum of Arnold about the monuments of strength has been received with more seriousness than it ever deserved. Is it true that all English poetry which has the religious sentiment as its basis is outworn Hebraism into which the English genius has fallen? There is no more reason for saying that English poetry based on the religious sentiment is alien than for saying that English poetry based on

any other profound emotion of the heart is alien. Furthermore, is the Celtic genius alien to lyrics expressive of the religious sentiment? Among all modern hymn-singers the Welsh seem to be the most enthusiastic; and there are no other such inveterate psalm-singers as the Scotch. The old Irish helped to civilize Germany and England with their hymns.

As for the Latin hymns of the Middle Ages, those of Bernard of Cluny and Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Abelard, and the others were surely not written in a dead language. Latin was not a dead language in Milton's time. Hymnody is alien to no language and no people except to those lacking religious sentiment and poetic impulse.

Despite the growing richness and varied excellence of the hymn-book, the old critical estimates of it, made long ago when the hymn as native English poetry had not come into its own, are still repeated by many critics. "The Cambridge History of American Literature," for example, contains a chapter by Professor Percy H. Boynton headed "Patriotic Songs and Hymns." The reader cannot be sure from the title whether or not the discussion of hymns is limited merely to patriotic hymns. He would suppose that it is so limited when he finds that nearly as much space is given to "Yankee Doodle" alone as to the whole subject of American hymns. But he finds less than three pages devoted to hymnody. And as he reads on he is likely to feel that it would have been as well if even less had been said.

For the discussion is uncritical and unfair. One could hardly write three pages and call it, without straining the meaning of words, "history" of American hymnody; the hymn is too prevalent and too important. It is as Edmund Clarence Stedman said, in his "Poets of America," the "kind of verse which is, of all, most common and indispensable." But even the historian's three pages are not devoted to hymnody; they are given over to a strident discussion of what is not hymnody at all, but doggerel about which few persons would need instruction, or about which thoughtful persons would hardly need to argue. Scattered through the pages are such terms as "bathos," "mortuary muse," "banalities of evangelistic song," "sentimental ornateness," "tawdry sentimentalism." This is indeed fair invective against the tawdry sentimentalism and the like which disfigure many compositions that pass as hymns, but beside the point entirely as regards the true hymn. The things attacked are not American hymnody.

We do not condemn all love-songs because there are inane and silly ones. There are good and beautiful love-songs quite different from current trash. There are plenty of medieval religious songs unspeakably maudlin and ridiculous. But that does not condemn medieval hymnody. One must distinguish. These lines from an anonymous hymn of the Middle Ages,

> O esca vermorum! O missa pulveris!
> O ros! O vanitas! Cur extolleris?

are not gracious and elevating poetry; nor are the following lines from old English times:

> Matthew, Mark, and Luke and John, I beg,
> The devil has tied up a knot in my leg,
> Crosses three we make to ease us,
> Two for the robbers and one for Christ Jesus.

The famous Latin hymn "Gloria, Laus et Honor" has a stanza translated by John Mason Neale:

> Be thou, Lord, the rider,
> And we the little ass;
> That to God's holy city
> Together we may pass.

It would hardly be fair to condemn the hymnody of the past by setting up these as fair examples of the hymnody, and hurling indiscriminate expletives at the whole.

One must of course admit that there has been published very solemnly much weak and ridiculous hymnic verse; the appeal of a great hymn is so general, and its clarity and simplicity make it appear so easy to do, that many persons attempt to write hymns who cannot write well at all, much less write in this very difficult form. The failures are so many and so obvious that these critics forget the splendidly successful efforts that make up the hymn-book.

There is to be distinguished from all banalities a volume of true elect American hymns—poems of impeccable taste and undeniable power. The standard set by such hymnists as Timothy Dwight, John

Quincy Adams, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, Phoebe Cary, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sidney Lanier, Phillips Brooks, Richard Watson Gilder, and John Hay is high. And though the standard is high, it is reached by a sufficient number to make a book of rich and beautiful religious song.

In his "English Lyrical Poetry," [1] for further example of thoughtless criticisms, Professor Edward Bliss Reed adopts a sportive attitude when he comes to consider the hymn—if it may be called considering this important province of poetry merely to poke irrelevant fun at Isaac Watts by quoting Dr. Johnson's remark about Watts's innocence of life.

Isaac Watts was in fact a courageous, noble man, a classical scholar, and a lyrical poet of frequent loftiness and delicacy. Dr. Johnson says in his short "Life of Watts," "Happy will be the reader whose mind is disposed by his verse or his prose to imitate him in all but his Non-Conformity." And further—these are the Great Lexicographer's words for the modern critic—"Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action will look with veneration on the man." Isaac Watts's hymns have stood severer tests than that of light ridicule. Watts displays at the same time the gentleness of a saint with the rugged strength of a trail-blazing pioneer. In the age of conformity he as-

[1] Yale University Press, New Haven, 1912; p. 369.

serted a stanch intellectual and religious independence. Professor Saintsbury calls him "a belated metaphysical." But rather, instead of being a drowsy follower to bed of Donne and Herrick, he was up early in a new morning, kindling fires for Cowper and Wesley, Burke and Adams, Burns and Wordsworth. Watts is an important figure in English literary history. He helped to make possible the political, social, and religious advance of the age following his, and the romantic movement in English literature owes him no uncertain debt.

In his volume, "The English Lyric," Professor Felix E. Schelling virtually disposes of the hymn with the remark that we may or may not "accept" certain hymns, but we do not have to read them. That is readily granted—unless of course one wishes to know them or to write just criticism about them. If, however, more people do read them and value them than read any other kind of poetry; if noble thinking in seemly diction and ringing cadence finds a lasting and general favor, so much so that, for whatever reason they may have, people get it by heart and sing it from one generation to another; it would seem to be literature.

Although the hymn, of all forms of verse, comes most readily to the apprehension and affection of people, it seems in the main to come most reluctantly from the pen of poets. Even the genius of William Cowper—his deep religious fervor, his exquisite good taste, his patience, and his extraordinary poet-

ical gift—did not avail to bring forth more than fifty lines of what the hymn-book to-day pronounces great hymnody.

One is especially impressed with the difficulty of writing good hymns when one considers that Charles Wesley, whom Julian in his great Dictionary calls "perhaps the greatest hymnist of all ages," and who wrote about sixty-five hundred hymns, is represented in the hymn-book by an average of only twenty songs. Time and the hymn-books seem to be lessening this figure to about ten, including "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"; "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"; "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne"; "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"; "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"; "Love Divine, All Love Excelling"; "Soldiers of Christ, Arise"; and "Come, O Thou Traveller Unknown." To have written ten hymns, or even two, that are borne near to the heart of English-speaking peoples throughout the world is of course to be still a power; yet for the greatest hymn-writer of the world to have reached the standard, say, only fifty times out of sixty-five hundred, indicates an exacting test.

Isaac Watts, if only as the author of "O God Our Help in Ages Past" alone, would be no inglorious poet; yet the hymn-book seems very severe in choosing but eight or ten of the more than six hundred published by "the great Doctor Watts."

Samuel Medley is remembered by "O Could I Speak the Matchless Worth," though he published 229 other hymns; George Matheson, by "O Love

That Wilt Not Let Me Go," though he wrote a whole volume of hymns. The author of "Fight the Good Fight" wrote three hundred other hymns. Ray Palmer, author of "My Faith Looks up to Thee," wrote two volumes of hymns. The hymn-book has chosen four out of the 127 hymns published by Bishop Wordsworth; this is a large percentage. William Wordsworth wrote and published a single hymn, "The Laborer's Noonday Hymn." But it was not successful; few of the books have included it. John Newton wrote many hymns for the Olney book; but the really great hymnody called forth by his extraordinary vigor, patience, and religious fervor is comprised in some threescore lines of the hymn-book.

Rudyard Kipling is the author of but one good hymn, one, however, which seems to belong among the fifty best of the language. The present laureate of England, who is a distinguished hymnologist, being an editor and in part author of a hymn-book, the "Yattendon Hymnal," has two or three lyrics which the hymnal may or may not accept as passably good. Still, of the many hymns written so far by Mr. Bridges, not one possesses that surging force and grace of life which bespeaks a sure survival among the elect lyrics.

"A good hymn," said Alfred Tennyson, "is the most difficult thing in the world to write." It was not until his eighty-first year that he himself achieved his single great hymn. He handed to his son, on their return one afternoon from a sail across

the bay, a piece of paper containing a lyric of sixteen lines.

"That," said the son when he read it, "is the crown of your life's work!"

The old poet gave explicit directions that it should be put at the end of all editions of his poems; and this stately and tender lyric, "Crossing the Bar," was sung a little later at the laureate's funeral in Westminster Abbey. Since that time it has taken its place, for the present day at least, among the small group of English hymns commonly sung at the burial of the dead. In some of the hymn-books Tennyson is represented also by certain stanzas from "In Memoriam," which, however, while being included in more and more of the books, do not approach his calmly triumphant death-song.

It is true that Spenser, Shakspere, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning are, except for one piece by Milton, one by Wordsworth, and two by Tennyson, not in the hymn-book. But it does not follow, as some are quick to assume, that all good poetry is otherwise shut out. That at the funeral of Robert Browning in Westminster Abbey England went back to Isaac Watts for a fitting hymn to sing does not argue either that Browning was not a glorious poet or that Watts's hymn was not both majestic and lovely enough to sing for any poet dead. "O God Our Help in Ages Past," as a lyrical poem, seems to have about it a finality that any perfect piece of art must have. It is no matter that Shakspere did not write it. If Shakspere and Browning

were not inclined or gifted to write hymns, or if Byron and Shelley and Tennyson were not sonneteers, the fact is not disquieting; they merely did not, for reasons easily ascertained, labor within this narrow scope. For the scope is narrow. The hymn is subject to all the limitations of other lyric poetry and to peculiarly rigid restrictions of its own. And one must admit that glowing perfection is rare here as elsewhere. All this being so, it is still a sober assertion that some of the English hymnic verse reaches a poetic height not often reached in our literature at all.

There are clear reasons why but little that the few major poets wrote is admitted into the hymn-book. Why they did not write good hymns is another question. Milton, having the supreme gift of poetry and a profoundly religious nature, and being, perhaps, as Professor William P. Trent says, the best single character of the English race, might have been expected to write the greatest hymns. He had a warm interest in hymns as had his father before him, who of himself has a dim immortality in the hymn-book as the author of the tunes "Norwich" and "York." John Milton did try his hand at hymns; but he is remembered in the hymn-book by but five stanzas, the psalm paraphrase, "Let Us with a Gladsome Mind." The morning hymn in the fifth book of "Paradise Lost," beginning with line 138, is not strictly hymnal; the blank verse, the long periodic structure, the elaboration of figure, and the localization all put it beyond the pale of the hymn-book.

The hymn is a quite definite and distinct type of poetry. Its boundaries as regards both form and content are plainly and narrowly laid down. It is of all types of literature perhaps the most rigorously limited. Merely as a lyric it would of course have narrow limitations; as a religious lyric its limitations are multiplied; but in that it must be the medium of concerted social thought and feeling on the gravest matters, and yet simple enough in form to be sung chorally by an assemblage not assumed to have any special choral practice or skill, it is very much more limited. The hymn must be a lyrical poem, simple of form, easy and smooth of movement; its ideas must be direct, unified, immediately apparent; its manner must have the decorum and gravity befitting public worship.

The intricate form, for example, of Milton's "Hymn on the Nativity" would bar it from the book were it acceptable in every other respect. For its stanzas are long and complex. The hymn stanza must be short enough to fit a simple musical setting, and invariably regular. A sonnet, were it ideal otherwise, could hardly find its way into the hymn-book; it cannot be divided into four-, or three-, or five-line stanzas. Even if it had twelve or sixteen lines so that it could be divided into quatrains to fit a simple musical scheme, its pentameter line would still be a difficulty. Of the scores of superb religious sonnets there is none in any hymn-book.

The severity of the demand for simple form is apparent at a glance through the hymnal. The sim-

plest of all poetic forms, the form most easily read and retained in the memory, is the ballad stanza, or what the hymn-book calls common meter. It is the form of "Sir Patrick Spens" and "Robin Hood." Wordsworth and Coleridge went back to it in "Lucy Gray" and "The Ancient Mariner." It is a four-line stanza, the first and third lines, tetrameter, usually riming; the second and fourth, trimeter, always riming. An example is Cowper's

> God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants his footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm.

There are more hymns in common meter than in any other measure. As this is the simplest stanza form, so is its tetrameter the simplest line measure for sustained and dignified verse. There are more four-measure lines in the hymn-book than all other lines combined.

Next to common meter the favorite stanza form is long meter, four tetrameter lines. Oliver Wendell Holmes's hymn beginning,

> Lord of all being, throned afar,
> Thy glory flames from sun and star;
> Center and source of every sphere,
> Yet to each loving heart how near,

is in long meter. Short meter is a stanza of four lines, the third tetrameter, the others trimeter.

A few more storms shall beat
On this wild rocky shore;
And we shall be where tempests cease,
And surges swell no more.

The first and third lines may rime; the second and last must rime. The third line, running out longer than the others, does not demand the rime sound, but the final line of the stanza does require a closing rime. Stanzas made up of trimeter lines alone are rarely found. The trimeter verse is too short and monotonous. Pentameter, on the other hand, which is by far the favorite line in English poetry generally, is rare in the hymn. Hexameter is exceptionally rare. It seems that practically the line longer than four feet is too much for the eye, reading at a glance—since it must watch the music-notes also—to catch at once. And even the few hymns written in lines longer than four feet tend to fall into easy rhythmic division, and are usually made into conventional hymn length by the music. The pentameter "Abide with Me" is thus subdivided by its familiar musical setting, "Eventide." On the other hand, if the poet has made the line too short, the music lengthens it. "Nearer, My God, to Thee" is written in dimeter and trimeter, but the tune really lengthens the verse into common meter. The iambic is far the most prevalent foot in the hymnal verse as in English verse generally.

Conformity to simple measure is but one of the restraints that the hymn-book places upon the poet;

it enjoins a sure simplicity of ideas, as well as of form. The good hymn is arrow-like in moving to its mark; its images, however brilliantly they may flash and gleam, must not—any more than the point and feather of an arrow—retard or deflect the movement. A stanza of Sarah Fowler Adams's famous hymn will illustrate this. It suited the purpose of the poem to tell—as a lyric may tell—the story in Genesis 28:10–19, of Jacob at Beth-el.

After the successful conspiracy to deceive his dying father who was blind, and to cheat his brother Esau out of his rightful property, Jacob fled for his life into a strange country.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. . . . And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el.

This passage furnishes a splendid theme for hymnody, and a number of good hymns are based upon

it, such, for example, as that of Madame Guyon, translated from the French by William Cowper. It begins:

My Lord, how full of sweet content,
I pass my years of banishment!
Where'er I dwell, I dwell with thee,
In Heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime:
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

But notice with what vividness of detail "Nearer, My God, to Thee" gives the picture as Madame Guyon's hymn does not. Still Mrs. Adams maintains a true lyric economy of words. Much might have been said about Jacob's homesickness, his guilty conscience, his fear of night and enemies, his hunger and cold, and so on through the story, the ladder, the angels, and all. But notice the swiftness and directness of the hymn narrative, and the sweep of its style:

Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee,
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I 'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Or, if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upwards I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

These lines might, by the way, be held up as a touchstone of hymnody. When one begins to measure other poems by the qualities of this one—its brev-

ity, its simplicity, its vivid imagery, its strong feeling under perfect control, its general artistic integrity—one finds what a rare and fine thing a perfect hymn is.

The essential directness of style is evident in the hymnal attitude toward external nature. The hymn poet may pass through gardens and pleasant fields, but he must not loiter there. In the more open fields of poesy he may wander as he likes, but in the aisle of the hymn he must go straightly. The journeying soul may see

> Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,

but the end of the journey, not they, is the poiht. Like Bunyan's *Pilgrim,* he may delight in scenes of natural beauty, but at the same time he must be on his way. The twenty-third Psalm deals with nature ideally from the hymnal point of view. The poem, as it is rendered in the King James version, is essentially, in manner, idea, and spirit, a model hymn, except for the fact that it has not rime and meter for the hymn music; translation as it is, unmetrical as it is, it is yet perhaps the single most popular English poem. It pictures vivid and unforgetable scenes of nature; but these scenes are not there merely because they are beautiful. The idea of the lyric does not wander after them; they accompany and serve the idea. The point of the poem is not green pastures, still water, and shadowed valley, but the care of the good Shepherd.

The frequent glimpses of natural scenery in the

hymn are often no less vivid and appealing because they are brief. Descriptions of one or two lines stamp themselves strangely on the memory. The curious critical notion that the hymn must be dun-colored and tame of spirit can be traced back to Dr. Johnson's famous and false pronouncement about devotional poetry. "The paucity of its topics," he said, "enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of its matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction." The English hymn was not then so strong to refute this as it is now, but the Hebrew was, and the Latin. Still this charge was met by Watts, in the preface to his "Hymns and Spiritual Songs," 1707, long before Johnson made it. "Have they forgot, or were they never told that many parts of the Old Testament were verse? and the figures are stronger and the metaphors bolder and the images more surprising and strange than ever I read in any profane writer?"

Indeed the best hymns are boldest in figure. So far from being undesirable, poetic vigor and color are necessary to great hymns; only this liveliness must not be what Herrick called "unbaptized." The hymn that figured night as

> That Ethiop queen with jewels in her hair

did not long survive. A hymn might conceivably point a moral by a Cleopatra or more easily by a Queen of Sheba, but it may not ask the saints to celebrate her charms, or to give her more than passing note. The hymn-book is not unreasonable in

these restrictions. It merely makes the demand of good art that the figures be congruous. It is but true to good art and good sense in excluding ideas and modes of expression alien to its spirit and purpose. These restrictions, though reasonable, are severely narrow.

The popular nature of the hymn demands a peculiar simplicity of form; its artistic nature demands the proper harmony and intensity of lyric emotion; its religious nature demands of it, as an act of public worship, an inflexible directness and dignity of style. For example, Herrick's "Litany to the Holy Spirit" ignores the last rule and thus fails to keep its opening promise of being an immortal hymn. The touching picture of the dying Christian is marred by the line,

> When the house doth sigh and weep

in the wind. Aside from its "pathetic fallacy," the line goes too far in particularization. The hymn has no interest in the peculiarities of a poet's house, or in the sounds about it, unless by some means these rise into the range of general grave concern. But even if there were some relation that would draw the assembly to sing of Herrick's house, there is yet a worse fault with the poem, which precludes any possibility of its being in the hymn-book.

> In the houre of my distresse,
> When temptations me oppresse,
> And when I my sins confesse,
> Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart, and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the artlesse Doctor sees
No one hope but of his Fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When his potion and his Pill,
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing, but to kill,
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the passing-bell doth tole,
And the furies in a shole
Come to fright a parting soule,
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the tapers now burne blew,
And the comforters are few,
And the number more than true;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the Priest his last hath praid,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decaid;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When (God knows) I 'm tost about,
Either with despair or doubt;
Yet before the glasse be out,
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And halfe damns me with untruth;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

When the judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to thee I have appeal'd;
Sweet Spirit comfort me!

The very effective first three stanzas would doubtless have been accepted and Herrick forgiven, if they were not logically incomplete without the impossible fourth and following stanzas. Objection to a doctor's potions would be no subject for the assembled faithful to incorporate into song. The hymn-book has no time for the incongruous or trifling. It is straightaway and brief in manner, for it must be about its earnest business.

"A truly spiritual taste," said John Billinsby in his edition of D. Burgess's "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs," London, 1714, "will keep well disposed minds so intent upon the weight and serious-

ness of the matter as not to leave them at Leisure for little Impertinences of Criticism upon the Phrase and Dress; or the exactness of Measure and Rhyme in these sacred composures." True enough; but the poet or poetaster must not presume upon any self-imposed title of sacredness. The truly spiritual taste and the well disposed minds that after all decide what shall make up the hymn-book have no use for little impertinences of criticism; but this constant critical judgment knows, given time enough, precisely what is fitting in a hymn and what is not; and it will brook no departure from its standard. There is an Avernus for hymns, and the descent thereto is easy. The hymn-book has its standard and is very strict in upholding it. While there are notable differences of style and idea in the hymn-books of different periods, the variations from the standard are naturally much less than the variations of some other kinds of poetry from their standards.

But it is interesting to find what a motley poetry has knocked at the door of the hymnal and once in a while, under the guise of "sacred composure," has found admittance—though not for long. Here are some lines, little better or worse than many of the translations that gained admittance for a time, from "The Bay Psalm Book":

> For thence he shall come for to judge
> All men both dead and quick
> I, in the Holy Ghost believe,
> In church that 's Catholicke.

Good Thomas Hopkins, of "Sternhold and Hopkins," lived in stormy, perilous times. Like St. Peter, he sometimes showed the impatience which is characteristic of the military mind.

> Why dost thou draw thy hand aback,
> And hide it in thy Lappe?
> O pluck it out, and be not slack
> To give thy foes a rappe!

In Reeve's "Spiritual Hymns" of the latter seventeenth century, No. 107 attributes to Deity a curious and surprising argument on the unity of the church.

> I am no Bigamist,
> I have no Concubines;
> It 's only one Church I admit,
> One child; I have no twins.

Hymn 111 of the same book is addressed to the church.

> Our hearts are swifter than our Charets;
> We 'll both conspire from our places:
> Thou here, and I from lofty Garrets,
> We 'll lift this world off its Basis.

There was a song in an old American hymn-book which was neighborly and frank, but a shade too peremptory. "Come go with us," it says,

> But if you will refuse us,
> We bid you all farewell;
> We 're on the road to Canaan,
> You on the road to hell.

The best hymns, indeed, are notable for boldness and animation of style, and always of course under artistic control. The single composition that would probably be named by more people, high and low, urbane and rustic, religious and non-religious, as the best hymn in the language, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," may be taken as a pattern for good hymn verse. As for life and spirit, not Byron nor Shelley ever wrote more exultant lines than these:

> Or, if on joyful wing,
> Cleaving the sky,
> Sun, moon and stars forgot,
> Upwards I fly.

Many of the modern as well as medieval and ancient hymns are all but too bold. Persons of milder temperament object to some of the old favorites as being vigorous to the extent of violence. A few lines of a famous hymn of the eighteenth century, Cowper's

> There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains,

are enough to show that excessive mildness is not an inherent trait of the hymn as a literary type. One can hear the stalwart poetry of medieval hymns even without knowing Latin.

> Dies iræ, dies illa,
> Solvet sæclum in favilla,
> Teste David cum Sibylla.

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

A well known hymn of the Old Testament, the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, closes:

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Whether the ancient pious sang this as fact or figure, modern taste may not at any rate tax it with lack of vigor. There is much of sweetness and gentleness in our hymnody, but there is tumultuous force in it also. There is no more reason for a hymn to be pallid and weak than for a person to be so. Within its scanty plot of ground the hymn can put forth as vivid purple and gold as grows in any field. These lines from Katherine Lee Bates's hymn—one which bids fair to enter the company of the world's great patriotic hymns—show that a hymn may be full of color:

Oh beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

A few passages further, based on the manifestations of nature we call the weather, show here that the hymn has force and color and variety to stir the heart and give flight to the imagination:

Ye winds of night, your force combine;
Without his high behest,
Ye shall not in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow's nest.

Kirke White.

Still, still, with thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight
Dawns the sweet conciousness, I am with thee.

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

Ye faithful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

The following lines are not untypical of the vivid imagery and the lyric intensity of the English hymn-book:

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green.

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling
camps,
They have builded him an altar in the evening dews and
damps;
I have read his righteous sentence in the dim and flaring
lamps,
His truth is marching on.

Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise;
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes!
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day.

Our years are like the shadows
On sunny hills that lie,
Or grasses in the meadows,
That blossom but to die,
A sleep, a dream, a story,
By strangers quickly told,
An unremaining glory
Of things that soon are old.

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow.

Lo, he comes with clouds descending.

Jerusalem, the golden,
With milk and honey blest.

How gentle God's commands!
How kind his precepts are!

Hark! hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields, and ocean's wave-beat shore.

There are many single lines of exquisite poetry which, because they are so familiar, fail immediately to arouse the imagination.

> In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time.

A startlingly magnificent lyrical summary of history is the second line.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me," becomes a more strangely rich verse as one regards it longer. Its six words comprise a trope of the Eastern deserts of the wildly imaginative quality of the story of "Open, Sesame"; an epithet, "Rock of Ages," traced by scholars at least three thousand years back; and a cry of fervent piety from the heart of rural England.

Following are other lines which may be considered illustrative of the imagery and feeling of the hymn-book. Some carry a feeling of elemental sadness, some of militant high resolve, some of sanguine praise and hope:

Time like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all her sons away.

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;

Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.

A few more years shall roll
O'er these dark hills of time.

From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat.

As pants the hart for cooling streams
When heated in the chase.

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might,
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight.

His are the thousand sparkling rills
That from a thousand fountains burst,
And fill with music all the hills,
And yet, he said, "I thirst."

Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings.

Hell's foundations tremble
At the shout of praise.

O, beautiful for patriot's dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears.

These scattered lines from the hymn-book indicate how this type of lyric, though it uses few and simple

words and the simplest form of verse, and though it may appear excessively plain, can convey large ideas and stir deep emotions. And Poetry is to the discerning mind none the less gracious when, meetly clad, she moves as a ministering spirit among all sorts and conditions of men, bearing consolation and courage and amplitude of spirit, inspiring charity and rightness of life and faith in eternal Providence.

CHAPTER II

HYMNS ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

THE congregational singing of hymns came into the Christian church by unbroken tradition from the old Hebrew worship. Both the hymns and the manner of singing them were continued, clearly, by the primitive Christians without any sense of change. The compilation of the old Hebrew book of religious lyrical poems, it seems, was begun for the Temple by that marvelous figure, David, who stands a towering figure as musician, statesman, warrior, athlete, economist, king, deep sinner, great man of God, and world's greatest hymnist; and it not only continued to be the hymn-book of the primitive church but is to-day still unaltered—except as translations necessarily alter poetry—a treasury of hymnody for general Christendom. The various branches of the church have various hymnals, official and unofficial, but the Book of Psalms is the book of lyrics that all agree upon and use. There is no good book of worship of any kind used by any section of Christianity in which the Psalms do not hold an important place. It is perhaps not going too far to name this old book of hymns as the most often quoted and generally the most familiar single book in the possession of Occidental civilization. It is not

strange, therefore, considering the place it holds today and considering the peculiar intimacy of the early Christians with it, that they quite naturally retained it as their own. One may not read the records far and fail to perceive indications of its continuous presence in the thought and affection of these people; that is, if one is at all familiar with the spirit and poetical manner of the Psalms. How near this book of poetry is to the heart of Christianity is indicated by its intimate connection with the life of Christ himself, from the story of the Annunciation on. His last words from the cross are quotations from the hymns of his people, Psalms 32:1 and 31:5.

The writers of the gospel and the epistles, concise and swift-moving as their style generally is, find time and occasion, according to a careful study made by Professor Crawford H. Toy, of Harvard, in his "Quotations in the New Testament," for 137 quotations from the Psalms. That the writers of the New Testament in their stupendous earnestness quote verses of lyrical poetry to so large an extent has its significance. It shows surely that this poetry was not only deeply based in the common popular affection but it stood in a place of highest intellectual power and literary dignity. The early Christians continued to sing, as their forefathers had done, from their most familiar and best beloved book.

But while this was the main source of its hymns, the church did not confine itself, even from the very early days, entirely to the Psalms. In the Book of Luke, Chapters I and II, are recorded four new

hymns; the song of Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist, beginning, "Blessed art thou among women"; the song of the Virgin Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"; the song of Zacharias, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"; and the song of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." It is not certain when these particular new songs were first sung in primitive places of worship.

The office of hymn singing in the early Christian church was much the same as it is found over the world to-day, especially among what are known as the more liberal branches of the church. This is evident from the descriptions we have of the singing of the time; few and concise descriptions they are, but quite clear. The first account of the singing of a hymn by an assemblage of Christians is given by both Matthew and Mark in identical words. The story is told with characteristic brevity and impressiveness. "And when they had sung an hymn [καὶ ὑμνήσαντες] they went out into the Mount of Olives."

It was at a meeting which took place in a large upper room, the guest-chamber of a house in Jerusalem. There were thirteen persons present, Christ and his twelve disciples. They had supper together, the last, a final solemn conference or communion. Church historians believe they can say with certainty that the hymn sung here was a part of the "Hallel," beginning with the ninety-fifth Psalm, "O come let us sing," and closing with the one hundred and eighteenth, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for

he is good." The occasion was the feast of the Passover; it was the custom to sing all or part of these psalms at that time. Whether it was one of these, or whatever the hymn was, we have a very definite account of hymn singing at the beginning of the Christian era. And it is significant that at the close of this highest feast in the history of mankind they should have sung a hymn.

It is not surprising that we do not find in the early records any detailed description of the manner of the religious exercise of singing. One might take the records of yesterday or of last year, and though he would find abundant mention of hymns even in the daily newspapers, he might search far without finding any detailed description of the singing. Still, in the comparatively few records of early days there are glimpses such as the one given above, which shows beyond a doubt that what is known familiarly to-day as congregational singing was a very prominent feature in the worship of the primitive church. The epistles make frequent mention of religious song, and urge the people to sing. St. Paul, writing to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse," says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." (Colossians 3:16.) That Paul was not writing merely an abstract theory about the socially and individually elevating effect of music and lyrical poetry is made evident by a dramatic glimpse of

him and his companion Silas, in jail at Philippi, given by St. Luke in the Acts. St. Paul is putting his theory of poetry into very definite practice. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them." (Acts 16:25.)

The Epistle of James, "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," has this admonition in regard to hymns: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (James 5:13.) It may be mentioned here that the words "psalm" and "hymn" seem to have been used almost interchangeably. The distinction in our use of the words seems to have been made arbitrarily and much later. The Hebrew name for the Book of Psalms was "Book of Praise"; the Greek term is in some manuscripts ψαλμοί, and in others ψαλτήριον, both from ψάλλειν, which meant the twanging of strings. It is significant that the Hebrew title-word for the book looked toward the poetry, and the Greek toward the music. The Latin and modern languages have followed the Greek in nomenclature, but the Hebrew in idea. "Psalm" and "psalter" come from "psaltery," a stringed instrument, as "lyric" from "lyre."

The Latin *hymnus* is from the Greek ὕμνος, a song of praise. "Psalms," as St. James used the word, perhaps did not differentiate the one hundred and fifty lyrics which we call the Psalms from the other religious lyrics, such as the Song of Miriam or the "Magnificat" or the "Nunc Dimittis."

There is another kind of indication that the people were interested in hymnody in those days. In our time the interest is sometimes so warm as to give rise to flurries of contention. There is a hint of the same thing in a letter of St. Paul to his flock at Corinth. "How is it, then, brethren?" he writes; "when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." (I Corinthians 14:26.)

To his group of converts in the desperate environment at Ephesus he writes, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19.) The clear ringing poetry of the passage, and the fact that the latter part is repeated in Colossians 3:13, suggest that the passage is itself the fragment of an early lost hymn, written possibly by St. Paul. The words are highly significant, too, as embodying for the scholarly saint and citizen of the world his theory of the nature and use of poetry. The idea clearly implied is that poetry in its origin is a sort of drunkenness, not of wine but of spiritual possession: be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit.[1]

The idea of the poise and composure of soul by

[1] Compare with this the idea of Plato and Aristotle as to the origin of poetry in the touch of the Muses' madness; and that of Cicero, that there is no good poetry, *sine quodem afflatu quasi furoris;* and Shakspere's "fine frenzy."

poetry is implied in the antithesis of "wine wherein is excess." The idea of the use, communally and individually, of the lyrics in question, shows how exalted was St. Paul's conception of the use of poetry in the world. The passage reminds one of another and lesser minister of religion, Robert Herrick, and his remark about "lyric" feasts contrasted with feasts where wine flowed freely. The poets, he said, were "not mad, but nobly wild." St. Paul was writing from a depth of earnestness and wisdom of which Herrick probably never dreamed; still, they both were touching upon the same mystery, the mystery of poetic inspiration and participation.

The diffusion of lyrical poetry among the people from whom sprang the Old and New Testaments is clear. They were profoundly religious people, and at the same time a profoundly poetical people. The blocked-out generalization that the Romans taught the world how to organize and prosecute efficiently the practical affairs of life, that the Greeks taught it broad-mindedness and good taste, and that Israel taught it religion, is a convenient generalization, and, of course, largely true. But the life of these dwellers among the Palestine hills was, if we judge by their literature, vibrant with poetic impulse. Their religious nature found utterance in their poetry. Their poetry is mainly lyrical. It is therefore to be expected that glimpses which we have of their daily life should show them singing hymns in their great temple choirs, in congregations, in smaller assemblages, and at home.

The leaders of the early church saw the power of the religious lyric not only as a means of spiritual gratification and nurture but also as a means of propagating the new doctrine. That is a matchless lyric which St. Paul himself writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter XIII: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels." To the Christians at Rome he sends a letter urging them to show spiritual hospitality to the Gentiles, quoting from the Psalms themselves, and pointing out the force of hymnody: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people." (Romans 15:9–12; Psalms 117: 1 and 18:49.) He quotes to the same effect from the twenty-second Psalm in the letter to the Hebrews: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." (Hebrews 2 :12; Psalms 22 :23–25) In the Apocalypse there are visions of the whole world come to so high a place of justice and concord that the nations sing hymns together in celebration of right judgment and of the Source of it.

As to the writing of new hymns to sing, the early Christians probably felt no other restraint than the limit of their ability to write poetry. St. Paul's poem on charity—Love for Humanity—mentioned above, may or may not have been sung as a hymn or

"spiritual song." There is a passage in the writings of St. Paul, Romans 2:35–39, which seems to be a complementary poem, on Love for God. It closes:

> For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Both might have been written for hymns, and sung in the congregation. Surely both are magnificent lyrics.

The following quotation in Ephesians 5:13 may be from a hymn the rest of which has been lost: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Certainly among the earliest hymns besides those mentioned are the "Gloria Patri," the "Ter Sanctus," the "Song of the Three Hebrew Children," and the "Te Deum." No one knows just when and by whom these hymns were written or first sung.

Objections to "new songs," as such, probably did not arise until the first great heretical controversies. These controversies between the orthodox and the Gnostics and the Arians gave rise to outbursts of hymnody on opposing sides. Up to the end of the first century there was probably little hindrance to the free composition and use of hymns in the meetings for worship. The famous letter of Pliny the

Younger, in Book X, written while he was governor of Bithynia, to the Emperor Trajan, describes the singing of Christians as he saw them in his province. It is a disappointing view of those pioneers of the faith; but one must remember that they were still frail human beings, and moreover that the letter is written by a pagan Roman governor to his pagan master. One must admit at the same time that Pliny's letter has a tone of fairness.

The letter, part of which follows here, was written from Bithynia about seventy-five years after the death of Christ. Pliny explains that the information concerning the meetings of Christians for worship was obtained by torture from two slaves who were called "deaconesses."

An anonymous placard was posted accusing a large number of persons by name. All those who denied being or having been Christians repeated after me prayers to the gods, and offered worship, with frankincense and wine, to your statue and to the images of the gods which I had brought in for the occasion; and they finally uttered malediction to Christ—none of which things it is reported a true Christian can be forced to do; these persons I thought fit to release.

Others under the accusation at first confessed to being Christians, then denied it—they had been, indeed, but they had given it up, some, three years, others many years, and some as many as twenty-five years ago. They affirmed, however, that the extent of their error or wrongdoing was in the fact that they were accustomed to meet on stated days before dawn, and to sing songs to Christ as god, binding themselves by solemn oath (*sacramento*)

not to commit crime, but to abstain from cheating, adultery, perjury, to meet to take food together; the meal was an ordinary one, however, with nothing wrong about it.

As the adherents of Christianity increased in numbers, and as Christian gatherings became established in towns and cities through a constantly widening range, it was but natural that new converts and new environments should add new elements to the hymnody. They of course retained the Psalms. But naturally this poetry would have to be translated into the tongues of the people over whom Christianity was making its new conquests. The new religion recognized no racial or national barriers; St. Paul and St. John had won that fight. If the Syrians, Greeks, or Romans had anything good and innocent to contribute, Christianity was, at least ideally, ready to accept it. So new rhythms, new music, and new songs came into the church as it spread its bounds. Eusebius in his "History of the Church," V: xxvii, speaks of the "psalms and hymns written by the brethren from the beginning" with evident approval. The first powerful influence directed toward curbing the poetic impulse of the church was that of Paul of Samosata. He translated the Psalms, emending them to suit his own notions, and adding his peculiar ideas to them. He insisted insolently that his translation should be the only one allowed, and that, moreover, nothing but the Psalms should be permitted to be sung. At the second council at Antioch, an appeal is made to the bishops of Alexandria and

Rome against him, charging that he had "put a stop to the psalms that were sung to our Lord Jesus Christ, as being innovations, the work of later times."

It was inevitable that in regard to the poetry of the church there should be a conservative element tending to exclude the new, and a forward element eager for untried things—that there should be extremists, the hidebound and the radical, the one rejecting much that was good and beautiful in rejecting all that was new; the other running after follies because they were merely new. Then followed lusty fighting among the hymners. The free-thinking saints and the orthodox saints were not only composing and singing hymns embodying their articles of faith, but they were organizing rival choirs of men and women. The streets of Constantinople rang at midnight with the songs of the choirs of Chrysostom, who was aided and encouraged by the empress, and with the songs of the Arians on the other side.

In Syria during the second century, probably near 150 A. D., Bardesanes, a poet and scholar, wrote many hymns and psalms tinged with Gnostic views. He was followed by other poets. Only fragments of this early Syrian hymnody remain now. But clearly it was much alive and influential in the middle of the fourth century, when Ephrem Syrus came out to do battle against it.

This champion of Christ put on his arms and proclaimed war against the forces of the enemies, especially against

the wickedness of Bardesanes and his followers. And the blessed Ephrem, seeing that all men were led by music, rose up and opposed the profane choruses of the young people, and taught them odes and scales and responses . . . and things of spiritual wisdom. . . . And he, like a father in the midst of them, in the churches, a spiritual harper, arranged for them different kinds of songs, and taught them the variation of chants; until the whole city was gathered to him, and the party of the adversary was put to shame and defeated.

Ephrem admits his opponent's skill, in these lines:

> Thus in his odes he testifieth—
> (This wizard by his blandishments,
> And this lax one of his melodies),—
> That he dishonors the fair names
> Of the Holy Spirit.

He says further,

> He therefore set in order
> Psalms one hundred and fifty
> But he deserted the truth of David,
> And only imitated his numbers.

These passages are from "Opera Ephraemi," Tom. VI, translated by Henry Burgess, "Lyric Hymns," London, 1853.

Ephrem deliberately set out to study the science of poetry in order to better what his rival had done. The following one of his hymns shows an entirely new element in Christian religious song. It shows

a more detailed and leisurely kind of speculation than is found in the Hebrew or New Testament lyrics. Its style is more after that of Mars Hill than of Mount Zion:

The soul having left the body,
Is in great suffering,
And feels much grief;
And she is distracted hither and thither,
Hither and thither,
As to her destination;
For the evil spirits desire
That she should go with them
Into the midst of Gehenna;
And the angels also,
That she should journey with them,
To the region of light.

In that moment,
The soul lightly esteems
Her beloved friends and brethren
Whom she held dear,
And her neighbors,
And those with whom she was familiar.
In that hour she despises
Whatever pertains to riches,
Or worldly possessions;
But respecting her trespasses
She has great anxiety,
They being so many.

Then the soul standing separate,
Above the body she hath left,

Speaks to it thus,—
"Death hath dismissed me,
Remain thou here in peace
For I am going away."
Then the body replies,—
"Depart thou in peace,
O soul tenderly loved!
The Lord who hath fashioned us,
He will procure our deliverance
From Gehenna!"

The following is a stanza from a hymn which may have been written to be sung in the assemblies and in the processions against the rival sects. The verses show that in spite of the fact that the singers have taken on much of the style of the extra-Judaic environment, they are sternly set against the Greek-world spirit of free speculation:

He is allied with the infidel
Who presumptuously investigates;
At the threshold of death
Standeth that daring one,
Who hath laid aside
His faith with his research
To descend to fathom
The sea of hidden mysteries.

Another stanza shows that while Ephrem Syrus did not, like some of the early fathers—and some of the English Puritans—forbid all except the canonical biblical verses in public worship, he did insist upon the Psalms as the only pattern. Still, as we

see, however much he tried to model them so, his own compositions were far from being like the Psalms.

Sing not, therefore,
What is derogatory to God,
Instead of his praise;
Lest thou err and sing folly.
Sing as David did
To the son of David,
And call him Lord and Son,
As David did.

This early religious struggle seems to have called forth an outburst of singing. Ephrem Syrus urges the faithful to compose and sing new songs.

Make thy praise ripe,
And offer to him
Of the clusters of grapes
Which thy tongue hath gathered.

A part of one of his hymns is addressed directly to the devil, examples of which in Christian hymnody are rare.

Cursed be thou, O Satan,
In the name of Jesus the God;
And let thy profane mouth be closed
At the command of Christ the Lord![1]

[1] William Blake's song addressed to the devil is another:

"Truly, my Satan, thou are but a dunce,
And dost not know the garment from the man . . .
Tho' thou art worshipped by the names
Of Jesus and Jehovah, thou art still
The son of Morn in weary Night's decline,
The lost traveller's dream under the hill."

These hymns of Ephrem say much about death. One of the songs examines into the graves of a beggar and a king, finding the ashes the same. Particularly frequent is the mention of singing itself, and making verses of praise, and playing accompaniments.

St. Basil, who died in the year 279, testifies to the power and beauty of the hymnody of his time. In the following passage, it is quite clear that he is speaking of what we now call congregational singing:

> If the ocean is beautiful and worthy of praise to God, how much more beautiful is the conduct of the Christian assembly where the voices of men and women and children, blended and sonorous like the waves that break upon the beach, rise amidst our prayers to the very presence of God.

It will be noted that the part of women in the singing of the early church is not left in doubt here; nor is it left doubtful in the accounts of Ephrem, Chrysostom, and Augustine. It is also noteworthy in this connection that two of the four great hymns of the New Testament are attributed to the authorship of women. There is no question that the singing of this age among the Christians was very general and very spirited.

These glimpses of the life of the Christians in the early centuries are enough to indicate that congre-

gational singing was a very prominent and important part of their worship.

Especially is it noticeable and significant that from the death of Christ on down through the ages, when the saints and martyrs and other faithful come to die they go out repeating or singing some verse or snatch of hymn or psalm. It shows how deeply this form of lyrical poetry has entered into their lives. Whether the church was suffering martyrdom or inflicting martyrdom, it seems to have been the rule that the smoke rising up around the stake choked the martyr's singing.

It is not within the scope of this work to discuss the origins and differences of the Christian liturgies. The purpose at this point is to show that from the very first hymn singing was an important part of Christian worship. Cantors or leaders were certainly employed in some places, as were trained choirs later. But this was by no means to the exclusion of congregational singing—the men, women, and children singing in concert. Old hymns, psalms, and canticles, as well as new hymns composed from time to time by men and women, were sung in the churches in smaller assemblages, and by individuals. St. Paul's prohibition of women's speaking in the churches was not a prohibition of their singing the hymns. The injunction that women should not speak is, by the way, good evidence that they had been speaking. Some think that the prohibition referred only to the women of the church at Corinth,

to which St. Paul was writing; but this is hardly likely, for the order seems to be general and is repeated in the letter to Timothy.

The fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians sheds a good deal of light on the primitive church worship. The writer directs that the service—singing, prayers, preaching, and discussions—is to be carried on in the language of the majority of the people present. This of course necessitated the translation of the songs. He says that although the people may have the spirit of prayer while repeating prayers in a language they do not know, it is better that they should understand what they are saying. He says, too, that he wishes to sing both with the "spirit and understanding." He further offers what seems a half-humorous rebuke to certain ones who, at least partly out of vanity, insist on using a foreign tongue. He tells them that while he is acquainted with more languages than all of them, he had rather say five words that could be understood than five thousand words in a strange tongue.

As for the psalms and spiritual songs which they sang, how or by whom they were translated is not clear; that is, of course, in the very early church. It is quite clear that before long the Psalms were translated many times. There were innumerable translations of the favorite ones, and many translations of the entire one hundred and fifty.

The oldest hymn of the Christian church, outside

of the Bible, say the historians of the times, is one by Clement of Alexandria. The well known translation by E. H. Plumptre begins, "Curb for stubborn steed." But Alexander's translation,

> Bridle of colts untamed,
> Over our will presiding;
> Wing of the unwandering birds,
> Our flight securely guiding;
> Rudder of youth unbending,
> Firm against adverse shock,

is the most literal and picturesque rendering. It is mainly a list of vivid metaphors addressed to Christ as the good Providence.

There was a great mass of Greek hymnody. To Gregory of Nazianzus alone are attributed more than thirty thousand hymns. John Mason Neale, in his "Hymns of the Eastern Church," computed that there are in the office-books of the Eastern Church at least four thousand closely printed quarto pages, in double columns, of hymnic verse. This does not include the earlier Greek hymns written in classical meters. There must have been, then, a great deal of hymn singing among the early Greek Christians. Even in their homes when they lighted their candles in the evening they had a particular song to sing; it is still a famous hymn used in the Eastern Church, and known in English hymnals as the "candle-light hymn." The translation by E. W. Eddie begins:

O, brightness of the immortal Father's face,
Most holy, heavenly, blest,
Lord Jesus Christ, in whom his truth and grace
Are vividly expressed;

The sun is sinking now, and one by one
The lamps of evening shine,
We hymn the eternal Father and the Son,
And Holy Ghost Divine.

This hymn is in the new hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

St. Basil (A. D. 370) refers to the custom and the hymn; it was "ancient" then, he says:

It seemed fitting to our fathers not to receive the gift of light at eventide in silence, but on its appearing immediately to give thanks. Who was the author of these words of thanksgiving at the Lighting of the Lamps we are not able to say.

There is frequent reference in this poetry to singing, and to musical accompaniment.

Wake, wake, I pray thee, shrill-toned lyre!
No more to fan the Teian fire,
No more the Lesbian strain to raise!
Wake, wake to hymn of nobler praise.

The following quotations are from A. W. Chatfield's "Songs and Hymns of the Greek Christian Poets":

And in the depth of sky
Unfathomed we descry
Thy ruling hand and power; for it is there

That thou the stars doth lead
And in Light's pastures feed
The glittering hosts with a true shepherd's care.

Notice the Greek way of saying, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." This is from the hymn of Bishop Syresius (375–430).

The following stanza from "A Hymn to Christ" by Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus (325–389), is typical of much of the Greek hymnody, more speculative, less concrete than the Hebrew:

Beginning none, nor end;
The self-spring Light art thou;
We cannot comprehend,
But to thy brightness bow,
Whose eye, repelling mortal gaze,
All things above, below, surveys.

His "Hymn to God," two stanzas of which in Chatfield's translations are given here, show the Platonic cast of mind:

Unuttered Thou, all uttered things
Have had their birth in thee;
The One unknown! from thee the springs
Of all we know and see.

And all things as they move along
In order fixed by thee,
The watchword heed in silent song
Hymning thy majesty.

Of all the images used to represent the Deity in these Greek hymns, it is significant that "light" occurs more often than any other, probably more often than all other figures combined.

John Mason Neale made a number of free renderings of Greek hymns which seem to have come into the permanent treasury of English hymnody. The dramatic lyric,

> Christian, dost thou see them
> On the holy ground?

is a powerful hymn. An example of almost purely descriptive lyric is seen in the hymn beginning:

> Fierce was the wild billow;
> Dark was the night;
> Oars labored heavily;
> Foam glimmered white,
> Trembled the mariners;
> Peril was nigh;
> Then said the God of Gods
> —"Peace! it is I!"

One of the few dialogue hymns of the English hymnody and one of the most beautiful of English hymns is Neale's translation, or rather paraphrase, of a hymn by St. Stephen the Sabaite (725–794):

> Art thou weary, art thou languid?

Another with much of the Greek spirit left in the translation begins:

> Unity of threefold Light.

It was written by Metrophanes, Bishop of Smyrna, around 910. Another,

> The day is past and over,
> All thanks, O Lord, to thee,

Neale tells us is still a great favorite in the Greek isles, and "is to the scattered villages of Chios and Mitylene what Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn is to the villages of our own land."

Since the middle of the last century there has been a growing interest in the discovered wealth of Greek Christian hymnody. The "Bishop of Jerusalem" controversy doubtless did something to stir up an interest in England. Hymnody seems to thrive during controversies and stirrings of soul.

In 1862 John Mason Neale's "Hymns of the Eastern Church" attracted much notice. Littledale, Dix, Chatfield, Brownlie, and Moorsom have made important contributions both in translation and criticism. In Leipsic, 1876, appeared the most important collection of Greek hymns, that of Paranikas and Christ, "Anthologia Græca Carminum Christianorum."

It is not surprising that this new knowledge of Greek hymnody has given the English church a new sense of the ideal unity of Christians, and has done much to minimize the differences between the Anglican and Eastern churches. Interest was aroused among some by the discovery of an old letter saying that John Wesley had received, before leaving for America, episcopal ordination from a bishop of

the Greek Church. If this were true, it would make John Wesley a priest in the Church of England, bishop of the Eastern Church, and a sort of archbishop of the Methodists all at the same time. This is mentioned merely as an example of discussions resulting from the interest aroused concerning the Eastern Catholic Church by the introduction of its hymnody into the Protestant churches.

We have seen that St. Paul and the early fathers urged the composing and singing of hymns in the new languages as Christianity made its new advances. No hymns in Latin, however, are now extant that were written before about the middle of the fourth century. The first Latin hymn-writer, a native of what is now France, named Hilary, was born at Poitiers, about 300. He was made bishop of his native city in 353. Banished three years later by the Emperor Constantine to Phrygia for being too zealous in theological controversy, he hears the Eastern Christians singing their hymns. A good deal of the four years' exile must have been spent in writing hymns after the manner of the East. His volume of hymns, "Liber Mysteriorum," has been lost. St. Alcuin ascribed the "Gloria in Excelsis" to him. He may have translated and introduced it. On his return from exile he seems to have aroused a new and fervid interest in hymn singing. His hymn beginning,

> Hymnum dicat turba fratrum,
> Hymnum cantus personet,

is typical of the frequent exhortation to singing.

Ambrose (340–397) was, like Hilary, a Frenchman, a great fighter, and a great singer. Both of these men were evidently strong and brilliant characters. The poetical powers of Ambrose are indicated in the old legend that at the conversion of St. Augustine in the church at Milan Ambrose and the new convert stood before the altar and composed and sang responsively the "Te Deum," which is marked by many as the greatest Christian hymn.

The writings of St. Augustine have frequent mention of the singing of psalms and hymns. For example, he advised his followers to memorize the Psalms, so that they might "with godly melody cheer up their very heart." In his "Confessions" he says, "I will call to mind the tears I shed at the hearing of the church songs in the beginning of my recovered faith." Before his time and since, many of the good and noble men of the world have attributed, with Augustine, much to the early influence of hymns sung by pious mothers. In his comment on the Psalms he says, concerning some Christians who had been driven out from their homes: "Were there then held any congregations and jubilees to the honor of God? Were those hymns chanted in concert from the churches of God what they were wont to be sung in concert in time of peace and to be sounded in a sweet accord of brotherhood in the ears of God?"

Doubt as to the matter of congregational singing of hymns in the churches at this time would, it

seems, be cleared by the words of Augustine himself. In his "Confessions" he writes,

How did I weep in thy Hymns and Canticles, sharply affected by the voices of the church sweetly singing them. . . . Not long had the church begun to practise this kind of consolation and exhortation, the brethren giving great care to the tuneful harmony of voices and hearts. . . . The devout people kept watch in the church ready to die with their bishop thy servant. There my mother, thy handmaid, bearing a chief part of those anxieties and watchings, lived in prayers. Then it was first instituted that, according to the custom of Eastern regions, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest the people should faint through fatigue and sorrow, and from that day to this the custom has been retained; and to-day indeed almost all thy congregations throughout other parts of the world follow that example.

Describing the death of his mother, the famous and pious Monica, he says:

The boy Adeodatus being stilled from weeping, Eudius took up the psalter and began to sing (our whole house answering him) the Psalm—"I will sing of mercy and judgment; to thee, O Lord, will I sing."

After days of unutterable grief [says Augustine], as I was alone in my bed, I remembered those true verses of thine Ambrose:

> Maker of all, the Lord,
> And ruler of the height,
> While robing day in light, hath poured
> Soft slumbers o'er the night.

Marcus Prudentius, a Spaniard, born in 348, eight years later than Ambrose, contributed many hymns to the Latin hymnody. Neale calls him "the prince of early Christian poets." A famous lawyer, judge, and soldier, he entered the church at the age of fifty-seven, and for the rest of his life was an ecclesiastical apologist and poet.

Now then at last, close to the very end of life,
May yet my sinful soul put off her foolishness,
And if by deed it cannot, yet at least by words give praise to God,
Join day to day by constant hymns.
Fail not each night in songs to celebrate the Lord,
Fight against the heresies, maintain the Catholic faith.

Merely the titles of his poems bear witness to the place of hymnody in the lives of the people: "For Cock-Crow"; "For Morning"; "Before Meat"; "After Meat"; "At the Lighting of Lamps"; "Before Sleep"; "Fasting"; "Burial."

The hymn "For Cock-Crow" shows his deep piety, and his mastery of the hymn form:

Ales, diei nuntius,
Lucem propinquam præcinit;
Nos excitator mentium
Iam Christus ad vitam vocat.

"Auferte," clamat, "lectulos
Ægros, soporos, desides,
Costique, recti, ac sobrii
Vigilante; iam sum proximus."

Iseum clamus vocibus,
Flentes, precantes, sobrii:
Intenta supplicatio
Dormire cor mundum vetat.

Tu, Christe, somnum disice;
Tu rumpe notis vincula;
Tu solve peccatum vetus,
Novumque lumen ingere!

Two stanzas of Neale's translation follow; he adds rime, which had not yet come into Latin hymns:

The winged herald of the day
Proclaims the morn's approaching ray;
And Christ the Lord our souls excites,
And so to endless life invites.

"Take up thy bed" to each he cries,
"Who, sick, or wrapped in slumber, lies,
And chaste and just and sober stand,
And watch, my coming is at hand.

The fourth century must have seen an outburst of song somewhat like that which Germany saw in Luther's time, France in Marot's time, and England in the times of Wyclif and of the Wesleys. St. Jerome, speaking of the hymnody of the period, says, "One cannot go into the field without hearing the plower at his halleluiahs, and the mower at his hymns." Augustine speaks with great feeling of the influence of the hymns which his mother had learned at the church of Milan.

These statements give some idea of hymn sing-

ing in Syria, Constantinople, and Rome. There is a curious account of a pilgrimage made to Palestine near the close of the fourth century, by St. Silvia of Aquitania. It may be that this pilgrim was partial to hymnody; but, at any rate, accounts of hymn singing have a large place in her story. Her party had been to the Mount of the Ascension singing:

> And thence with hymns, all, down to the smallest child, descend on foot to Gethsemane. . . . When they arrived at Gethsemane, first a suitable prayer is offered, then a hymn is sung, then that passage of the gospel where the Lord is apprehended; and there is much moaning and groaning of all the people with weeping that the groans may be heard almost to the city. From that hour, they go on foot to the city with hymns.[1]

She was at Jerusalem at Easter. After mass, she says:

> Both men and women, as many people as wish, go up to Olivet. Hymns are sung and prayers offered. After that psalms have been sung and prayers offered, they descend again with hymns at the hour of vespers. . . . Selections are read there, and hymns interspersed; antiphons are also sung suitable to the day and place.

Another indication of the prevalence of singing is in a letter from Jerome concerning the death of Paula in Jerusalem:

> No weeping nor lamentations followed her death, but

[1] "The Pilgrimage of St. Silvia of Aquitania to the Holy Places." Translated by John H. Bernard, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, London 1891.

all present united in chanting the Psalms, each in their several tongues. . . . One after another they chanted the Psalms, now in Greek, now in Latin, now in Syriac, throughout the remainder of the week.[1]

Clement of Alexandria in one of his homilies says, "A noble hymn of God is an immortal man established in righteousness in whom the oracles of truth are engraved."

Ancient Latin hymns may be said to close with St. Gregory the Great. The hymn "Veni Creator"—translated, "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire," by John Cosin—is attributed uncertainly both to Gregory and to Charlemagne. "The Gregorian tones or chants," says Julian in his "Dictionary of Hymnology," "we owe to his anxiety to supersede the more melodious and flowing style of church music, which is popularly attributed to St. Ambrose, by the severer and more solemn monotone which is their characteristic."

With Fortunatus (530–609) and the Venerable Bede (637–735) begins the medieval hymnody which reached its splendid height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In form the Latin verse had tended more and more to break away from the classical quantity measure and to fall into the accented measure. With it came the decoration of rime. Hymnody became more and more popular, and more rich and splendid through the Middle Ages. The rime and the musical beat charmed the

ears of the common people and clung in their memory. "This verse," says Clement Blume, in his article on hymns in "The Catholic Encyclopedia," "was especially for the congregation; for the people who in those days took a much more active and important part in the Liturgy than is now the case. Christian hymnody is therefore originally and essentially a poetry of the people." For influence, no other form of literature of the Middle Ages approached its hymnody. The fact that half a dozen of those hymns, translated into English within the last two generations, have taken their places among the most familiar and best loved hymns indicates that the praise lavished upon them by modern critics is just; but nothing can indicate their splendor and magnificence except the Latin poems themselves. The "Dies Iræ," named the most splendid of them all, while it is what Theodore Parker termed a "damnation lyric," has a tremendous music about it, and a combination of pathos and grandeur that would distinguish any century that produced such a song.

"Jerusalem the golden"; "Jesus the very thought of thee"; "Jerusalem, my happy home"; "O come, all ye faithful," as the first lines of English translations, are powerful in themselves. The number of these medieval hymns still extant is enormous. The largest collection of them is that brought together by Dreves and Blume, "Analecta, Hymnica Medii Ævi" (Leipsic, 1866–1906); it is made up mainly

of hymns that had not been published by other compilers, such as Mone, who had previously brought out three large volumes. The Dreves and Blume collection fills fifty-four large volumes, averaging about two hundred and fifty poems to the volume. Ker, in "The Dark Ages," says,

> No literary work of the dark ages can be compared for the extent and far reaching results of its influence with the development of popular Latin poetry. The hymn went further and affected a larger number of people's minds than anything else in literature.

Two things about the hymns are increasingly noticeable: the trend toward perfection of music, meter, and rime, and the trend toward the worship of the Virgin and the saints. The verse and structure and the riming effect are developed into marvelous creations.

Lines of Bernard of Cluny's "Laus Patriæ Cœlestis" or "In Contemptu Mundi" will indicate the involved artistry:

> Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt vigilemus;
> Ecce minaciter, imminet arbiter ille supremus.

About 90 per cent of the hymns of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are addressed to or made in honor of the Virgin or the saints. The deeper thought of the people, and the gradual changes of thought, are clearly mirrored in their songs. "Hymns bear testimony," says T. Hill Odell in his

"English Monasticism," "not only literary but historical, as to the state of the church at any given time, and certainly it is one of the best and purest testimonies that can be found."

Surely, then, these hymns are out of an age of lively and fervent faith. Those people believe with a will. Their hymns are triumphant statements of faith. Even the hymns picturing the misery of the world take on a swing and beat and rime that is all but joyous.

One proof of their consummate art is in the way with which the songs seem to feed the hungry spirit. The hungering mendicant could walk the road in his dirt and rags and sing himself into possession of lavish riches and comforts—palaces, clear fountains, gardens, and gallant walks, whitest clothes, and jewels.

In these hymns, too, we can see the heart speaking out in contradiction to certain dogmas. "Against the things ye bid me speak," says Whittier's hymn, "my heart within me pleads." An example of this may be seen in Bernard of Clairvaux's "Ad Christum a Cruce Pendentem." The dogma and logic of the Middle Ages said that the human form is vile food for worms, hateful, shameful, a foul bond holding down the wings of the soul. But in this hymn the physical form is praised. There are seven sections of it, each devoted to a member of the body. And they could honor, sing hymns, to the rosy flesh of Mary. Not only was the body of a saint honorable, but even a piece of bone,

the dust of the foot, was holy. If their older theology degraded the physical being, their hymns cried out in the other extreme, exalting it.

There is a more striking instance of the poetic spirit and the human heart asserting itself in spite of dogma and scholastic logic. Womankind in the medieval days was held, with Eve as the prototype, to be distinctly the ally of the evil powers, and the one responsible for the deplorable state the world had got itself into. Chaucer's *Man of Lawe* expressed the idea:

> O Satan, envious sin thilke day
> That thou wert chased from our heritage,
> Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
> Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage.

And yet in spite of themselves they were worshiping, as the special object of devotion, Mary, the type of the eternal woman; in her was gentleness, kindness, meekness, instinctive good sense, sympathy, wholesome womanly indignation. From the thousands of stories of Mary's common sense and timely help, one sees what these men thought of woman in spite of dogma and tradition. The Blessed Virgin, an idealized type of their own womankind, was impetuous at times; she had been known to change her mind. It was after all the woman, in spite of the hard doctrines about her, that made the world livable. A good clerk was tired out and sleepy; the Virgin would take the book and sing in his place, who had always been punctilious in

showing toward her image the proper tokens of respect. She would reach out her arm and deal a sound miraculous slap to some undutiful clerk or layman who needed it. She once gave a bishop a good beating for deposing one of the younger clergy who had never yet passed her statue without obeisance. Good Walter of Birback, delayed for a tournament, found when he reached the field that he had already vanquished his evil opponents; the Virgin had taken his place. A man sold his wife to the devil. The wife, suspecting something, stopped at Mary's shrine. The Virgin took her place, rode to the rendezvous, and sent the old dragon howling into hell.

The hymns of this period were to Mary. If their hard logic made God an angry, unreasonable, and unlovable deity whom they could not truly worship, they could praise their gracious ideality, the kind, just, humane Virgin. Their scheme of thought condemned woman, but their hearts and their hymns adored her. If their dogma took the kindness and humaneness out of religion, their hearts put it back and their hymns asserted it in great joy and beauty.

In England, both the Latin hymnody and the vernacular had flourished from the first. Augustine's missionaries landed and swung up the beach into line singing Latin hymns. The first poetic note in native English poetry, as we have seen, was hymnal, as had been the case in French poetry. And in Germany hymns had their most familiar home. Hymns had been sounding through Europe for these cen-

turies, and had become part of the bone and sinew of the people.

A volume of verses might be cited to show the astonishing skill with which the later medieval poets wrote their hymns. But the art fell off finally into mere verbal ingenuity.

From the many thousands of Latin hymns the English hymn-books have chosen a few of the great ones. Doubtless more of them will be adopted as better translations appear. Among the most familiar are: "Adeste Fideles," of the eighteenth century, authorship unknown; the "Dies Iræ," probably by Thomas of Celono, about 1250; "Pange Lingua Gloriosi," by Thomas Aquinas, about 1260; "Stabat Mater Dolorosa," by Jocopone de Todi, in the thirteenth century; "Veni Creator Spiritus," authorship uncertain, about 800; and "Vexilla Regis Prodeunt," by Fortunatus, 569.

The Dark Ages were dark—but not utterly dark. Grant all the dust and woe, the inarticulate want, the ignorance, the dirt, and wretchedness of the common people; the gorgeous finery and stupid cruelty of the upper few; the barbaric enthusiasms, the spiritual hysteria, the plagues, the brooding superstitions, the fiendish persecution: still the human spirit was alive and striving.

There were the great waves of popular devotion, acts of faith, self-renunciation for the love of God, which drew men together as one to raise the towering churches, and to move away into the Crusades. Simple peasants, kings, and little children did their

cheerful parts; princesses strained their shoulders against the ropes that pulled the huge stone-cart toward the rising cathedral, hymns of praise in stone. There was much of faith and hope and charity. The surging hymns of the Middle Ages were proof of it; they were born of faith and hope and charity and love of light and beauty; they could not so have sounded through hall and hut by the roadsides, down the foot-paths, through fields and pasture-lands, in the churches and the cloisters, without themselves kindling and keeping alive the Christian virtues. Their words and music, sometimes pensive, sometimes hilarious, helped to break the hold of unknown terrors, enchanters, dragons, and fiends; they gave surcease to grief and pain; they called the voices of neighbors into unison and their hearts as well; they kept alive a common zeal for the City of God. The old age was not the golden age, but there was a glow of gold in it which would never have been there but for the great hymns that moved like the winds through Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE NATIVE ENGLISH HYMN

WITH the coming of the Renaissance, Latin hymnody became one of the old things that must pass away. Its heavy surges, sounding so powerfully through the age that created it, now began to recede and to become an echo. Its art had finally overdone itself and had become an empty exercise, the expression not of aspiring faith but rather of ingenuity in making words tumble like jugglers' balls in astonishing feats of rhythm and rime. The new classical taste, moreover, rejected its Gothic exuberance of form. The church, under order of the pope, made a sweeping reformation of the words and music of its song. "Hymnody then," says Clement Blume, S. J., co-editor of the monumental "Analecta Hymnica Medii Ævi," "received its death blow, as under the revision of the breviary under Pope Urban VIII the medieval rhythmical hymns were forced into more classical forms by means of so-called corrections. The hymnody of the Middle Ages is now only an historical monument which bears witness to the artistic skill, the joyful singing, and the deep religious life of our forefathers."

But the Christian hymn was not to pass away;

Christianity is a singing religion sprung out of another singing religion whose ancient admonitions said, "Let all the people praise thee," "Praise the Lord with a harp," "Sing unto him a new song," "Enter into his courts with song," "Sing ye praises with understanding," "Praise him all ye people." The early church rose with singing and made its progress westward with ever increasing sweep of song. And when the mighty harmonies of the Middle Ages died away there was still singing.

Native vernacular hymns had always existed in England along with the Latin. The Latin hymns which the first missionary band sang as they landed and marched up the shore of Britain were not long in finding echoes in the language of the island. The first song of her first poet was a hymn. The uppermost spring of the stream of England's literature is a clear-flowing lyric, a hymn of praise to God. This poem of the first known writer of English gives forecast of a sturdy quality of the literature to consider duty and decorum of life, and "to assert eternal Providence." The legend of the shy lad, Cædmon, is not likely to be too often called to mind.

As he slept in the hay in the stable at Whitby, one stood by him and said, "Cædmon, sing me something."

Cædmon said, "I do not know how to sing; that is why I left the feast and came out here."

"Still, you might sing."

"What shall I sing?"

"Sing the beginnings of all created things."

And Cædmon began to sing:

Nu scylun hergan Heofonriches Uard—

"Now shall we praise the heaven-kingdom's Keeper." Professor Cook's translation is as follows:

Now must we hymn the Master of heaven,
The might of the Maker, the deeds of the Father,
The thought of his heart. He, Lord everlasting,
Stablished of old the source of all wonders:
Creator all-holy, hung the bright heaven,
A roof high upreared, o'er the children of men;
The king of mankind then created for mortals
The world in its beauty, the earth spread beneath them,
He, Lord everlasting, omnipotent God.

The Venerable Bede (673–735), who was probably a child when Cædmon was an old man, tells in his "Ecclesiastical History" of a good deal of hymn singing; he composed a book of hymns, and himself died singing. St. Patrick and St. Colomba and their followers had cheered their own hearts with psalms and hymns and had charmed many savage hearts with them. King Alfred so loved his hymn-book that he carried it in his bosom and sang as he went to war or traveled among his people or even when he went hunting.

Native English hymns flourished along with the Latin hymns. There were many hymns of Latin and English lines alternating and of English verses with Latin refrains. The Lord's Prayer, the Creed,

the ancient Latin hymns, the Psalms, and even the Catechism were turned into popular rimes and generally sung. Professor Carleton F. Brown's "Catalogue of Old and Middle English Religious Verse," in two large volumes, gives an idea of the extent of this kind of poetry. A considerable part of the verse listed is lyrical.

Some of the songs are quaint and lovely; some are plodding, earnest, well-intentioned, and dull. Ideas of the Deity are frequently startling in their naïveté. One pious rimer concludes that "God is a clever wight," since he did all his work of creation by word of mouth rather than by hard labor. Here are some examples of the native religious song:

Suete iesu, myn huerte gleem
Brytore then the sonne beem.

Suete iesu loverde myn
My lyfe, myn huerte, al is thin.
Undo myn herte, out lyht ther yn
And wite me from fendes engyn.[1]

Mary flowr of flowrs all,
Hath born a chyld in an ox stall,—
That lord and prynce is over all:
Puer natus est nobis.

By an apull of a tre
Bound men all made were we,
That chyld was born to make us fre:
Puer natus est nobis.

[1] Harleian MS. No. 2253. Edited by the Early English Text Society.

The chyld was don on the rode
With hys flesshe & with hys blood,
For our helpe & for our gud:
Puer natus est nobis.

The IIIde day he rose & to hevyn went,
Wytt & wysedom us he sent
For to keep hys commaundment:
Puer natus est nobis.

He shall cum down at domys day,
With blody woundis I you say,
As he dyed on Gud Fryday:
Puer natus est nobis.

Now pray we to that hevyn kyng
To send us all his dere blessyng,
Shryft & hosyll at our endyng:
Puer natus est nobis.[1]

Another, long and doleful, ends each stanza with the refrain,

Alas my hart will brek in thre,
Terribilis mors conturbat me.

One feels that the anonymous author of the following verse was an earnest soul if he was no poet:

Lord, my God al merciable,
I the bi-seche with herte stable
That I mouwe wilne that thing
That most may beo to thy lyking.

[1] From the MS. of Richard Hill, 1508–1836. Edited by Roman Dyboski, PH.D. Publication of the Early English Text Society. Extra series 101. London, 1907.

Now, as earnestness of purpose and freedom of spirit are outstanding traits of Christian hymnody, they are outstanding traits, too, of the English people. It might have been expected, therefore, that freedom-loving and earnest England would be the land where the hymn would greatly flourish. And it has flourished. There has been a lively English hymnody as long as there has been an English language. And it has been a great thing that the rhythm of this song joined in with the rhythm of English scythe and oar and spinning-wheel and cradle to lighten the burden of toil and lift up the hearts of the people.

But as vigorous and variegated and prevalent as this union of popular poetry and popular music was in England, it strangely weakened and paled at the one time in English history when it might have been expected most to flourish. The Reformation, born of that new freedom of thought and worship which produces the best hymnody, did not in England, as it gloriously did in Germany, speak out richly in the native vernacular hymn.

The Elizabethans did not write hymns as we understand the term. There was rich popular music and abundant religious poetry; hardly a poet from Wyatt on down did not bring forth his "Divine Poems." But the distinctive hymn was in disfavor and neglect. The Puritans said: We will tolerate nothing in our worship which is not plainly scriptural. We will sing only those religious songs that are in the Bible: the poets may turn the Bible

literally into rime and meter for us; we will sing that, but we will not tolerate in our public worship of God any hymn of mere "human composure." The other and complementary party likewise banned all contemporary and recent hymnody, not, however, because it was outside the Bible canon, but because it lacked the sanction of ancient ecclesiastical usage.

So it was that the age of Elizabeth, which might perhaps have produced for England poetry as rich and beautiful in the smaller scope of hymnody as it produced in the large province of drama, and which gave us lyric poems that are still the glory of the language—some of them religious lyrics, too—gave to the English hymn-book hardly a single stanza that may be called hymnic. It is true that the poem containing, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home," and "O Mother Dear, Jerusalem" were written then; but these hymns are stanzas selected from a long anonymous poem signed "F. B. P.," and they did not become hymns till the close of the eighteenth century.

It was not, of course, because of any lack of religious feeling or of the lyric spirit that there were no Elizabethan hymns. There was much religious singing and sacred music. It was the age of Tallis and William Byrd and of other great and many minor church musicians. Whole chapters, for example, of the Acts were turned into rime and meter, set to music, and sung in the Chapel Royal. Whole books, including the chronological lists of names, were versified and sung, seemingly with fervor. The Psalms were sung to the tunes common in the

streets and the shops of barbers, and in the taverns. They were sung in the cathedrals and in the cultivated homes such as that in which John Milton was nurtured. But from these golden days of English life and literature there have come down to us no great hymns; there was, as we have seen, no popular demand, no social feeling, to inspire the rich native hymnody.

It takes more than a devout and wise poet to make a hymn; it requires a people to call forth poetry of any kind. Especially is this true of that most social type of poem, the hymn. The history of poetry and especially of hymnody shows that it requires social thinking and communal feeling as well as individual gift to make poetry. "Paradise Lost" was a poem of Puritan England no less than of John Milton.

It is not by chance that poets stand in groups. The poetic movements and the poetic notions which group poets together from time to time are not entirely of the poets. Wordsworth and Coleridge needed each other and needed the social thinking and feeling of their time to make them the poets they were. The poetry of Keats and Shelley and Byron is the poetry of the age of spiritual awakening and revolt, of a wave of communal feeling and thinking, as well as of the three individuals. The New England transcendentalists were poets not merely of and for themselves, but of and for the common mind and spirit of transcendental New England. Shakspere was the voice of William Shakspere; but he was even more the voice of Elizabethan

England. If the poet spoke merely of himself, and were not the voice of a deeper social mind, we might have a Longfellow singing with Pope, and a Dryden singing heroic couplets of seventeenth-century wisdom in Alaska or Arizona. If Charles Wesley had been living in the time of Donne and Herrick he would probably have written no hymns at all; the type had not been developed in the minds of the people and the poets. And had he lived then, and had he conceived independently of the type, he would not have written many hymns, there being no demand for them and no response to them. Ken and Watts and the religious revival of the eighteenth century together with Charles Wesley produced "Jésus Lover of My Soul" and "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing." When Herrick and Donne wrote, if the people had been singing religious lyrics of our poets in their worship, the poets would have responded with lyrics to sing. And the people in turn would have learned and set up a higher standard. It required Ken, Watts, and Wesley to develop the hymn, but it took a hymn-minded England to develop Ken, Watts, and Wesley.

Tethered poets could not write great hymns. There was a prodigious amount of metrical psalmody, some of it good, so far as second-hand poetry can be good, but the blighting effect of this kind of repression upon poetic form and spirit is evident as one reads over the metrical versions of Psalms made by some of the best English poets, including Milton.

And thus it came about that while Germany was

making so splendid a hymnody, the Elizabethan age produced no great hymns. Michael Drayton expressed this idea of limitation well enough in the preface to his "Harmonie of the Church containing the spiritual Songs and Holy Hymns of Godly men, Patriarchs, and Prophets; all sweetly sounding to the praise and glory of the highest. Now (newly) introduced into sundry kinds of English Meeter; meets to be sung or read for the solace and comfort of the godly" (London, 1591):

> Gentle reader, my meaning is not with the variety of verse to feed any vain humor, neither to trouble thee with devices of my own invention, as carrying an overweening of my own wit; but here I present thee these Psalms or Songs of Praise so exactly translated as the prose would permit, or sense would in any way suffer me; which (if thou be the same in heart as thou art in name, I mean Christian) I doubt not but thou wilt take as great delight in these as in any poetical fiction.

It is a tragedy of literary history that Drayton did not express more "devices of his own invention," not only so far as religious lyrics go but in the broader field of literature as well. His opinion about originality in religious song was all but a universal opinion, and consequently the native hymn of modern English had little inspiration and response such as the great hymnists had had. It is hard to imagine what the Elizabethans might have done with the hymn.

The sweeping corporate fervor for singing, such

as had called forth the Psalms themselves in their time, was lacking to the Elizabethans; their ears never quite caught the hymnal note. Wyatt and Surrey, blazing the way for modern English poetry, had written hymn verse; but it was verse patterned slavishly upon the models of the Psalms. In sonnets and other lyrics they wrote freely and brilliantly for their early time, but in this province.

William Drummond of Hawthornden published in his "Flowers of Zion" (Edinburgh, 1620) some religious verse of high quality. But not one of these poems falls exactly into the hymn type; he did not attain to the making of a single good hymn. His "Ascension Hymn" will serve as well as any to show this, and will give a hint why:

> Bright Portalles of the Skie
> Embossed with sparkling Starres,
> Doors of Eternitie
> With diamantine barres.
>
> Your Arras rich uphold,
> Loose all your bolts and Springs,
> Ope wide your leaves of gold;
> That in your Roofes may come the King of kings.

To fitting music this poem, so far, would be a rather gorgeous hymn. Except for its slight antiqueness, I do not see that it is much inferior to Pope's "Rise, Crowned with Light, Imperial Salem, Rise," or Addison's "The Spacious Firmament on High," both of which it resembles in combined fervor and splen-

dor. But in the following stanza it loses the hymn quality of restraint from gaudy decoration:

> Scarfed in a rosy cloud
> Hee doth ascend the Aire,
> Straight doth the Moone him shrowde
> With her resplendent Haire.

The figure of the moon's hair, while it may be pretty fancy, is a patent violation of that churchly dignity which slight practice in hymnody would have shown Drummond that the hymn demands.

A hymn of Phineas Fletcher, published in 1670, twenty years after his death, beginning,

> Great fount of light, whose overflowing streams,
> Lend stars their dimmer sparks, suns brighter beams,

shows another departure from the hymn standard: the lines are too subtle. One has to pause in reading them to see what they mean. If Fletcher had been a contemporary of Keble he would have found out that the meaning, or least some meaning, must be instantly evident. Neither the music nor the momentum of corporate vocal expression will allow any pause for studying out subtle meanings.

> Cease, then, my tongue, and lend unto my mind
> Leave to bethink,

says Spenser in his "Hymn of Heavenly Beauty" (l. 106). This poem—itself of course not a hymn—makes a clearly impossible demand upon the singing hymn; one can not at the same time sing and stop

singing to think. Thinking must go along with the expression.

Ben Jonson's "Hymn to God the Father" lacks a quality which the hymn type very definitely demands, and which yet is hard to describe critically. James Montgomery calls the quality in his own case "mediocrity of mind" and with his rare candor thanks God that he has it.

Hear me, O God!
A broken heart
Is my best part.
Use still thy rod
That I may prove
Therein, my love.

If thou hadst not
Been stern to me,
And left me free,
I had forgot
Myself and thee. . . .

Who more can crave
Than thou hast done?
Thou gav'st a son
To free a slave
First made of naught,
With all since bought.

Sin, death and hell
His glorious name
Quite overcame
Yet I rebel
And slight the same.

But I 'll come in
Before thy loss
Me further toss
As sure to win
Under his cross.

The hymn is too much the expression of the rare Ben Jonson, and not enough the expression of the ordinary folk, to be a good hymn. It is devout, musical, and mainly simple and honest. But if we or Ben Jonson's contemporaries were to sing it, we should need to pause to see what he meant by

First made of naught
With all since bought.

"Use still thy rod" would cause many to pause if they thought what they were saying. The last two lines are not immediately clear. Again, the poem has stanzas of irregular length; and that would bring confusion in the musical setting.

An injunction by Queen Elizabeth in June, 1559, provides that

For the comforting of such as delight in music it may be permitted that in the beginning of Common Prayer either at morning or evening there may be sung an hymn or such like song to the praise of Almighty God, in the best melody and music that may be devised, having respect that the sentence of the hymn may be rendered and perceived.

But the fact that the law permitted it did not mean that the right was to any extent exercised.

Even Isaac Watts, as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, while protesting violently for lyrical freedom, was careful to state in the headings that most of his hymns were based on some part of the Scriptures. Poets had never been limited entirely to the Psalms for models. Various poems and other passages of the Bible were turned into verse; witness the fact that Christopher Tye, tutor of Edward VI and Mary, felt impelled to turn the entire Book of Acts into common-meter stanzas—the Acts! But the Psalms held the central place.

If the following lines of Crashaw, "A Song of Divine Love," had been written to supply the need of "a hymn or such-like song" one sees how it is not an expression of worship to be used by a public assembly:

> Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
> Sends up my soul to seek thy face
> Thy blessed eyes breathe such desire
> I die in love's delicious fire.

However devout its aim, its style is too fulsome for a hymn. In the following lines, "To the Name above Every Name; a Hymn,"

> Awake, my glory, soul (if such thou be,
> And that fair word at all refers to thee),
> Awake and sing,

is shown an example of personal particularization the like of which is not possible in a good hymn.

The poet here becomes a peculiar person, so that a company of persons could not sing his lines as the expression of their common mind. Probably not one other person would either feel or have any interest in the doubt as to whether one might address his soul by the name of soul.

It seems a sort of misrepresentation of Jeremy Taylor to quote him as a hymn poet; but he wrote a volume, "Festival Hymns" (1665). Not one of them is even a moderately good hymn. A master of English prose, a man distinguished for sense, and a saint for piety and goodness, he never attained to true hymnody. The first lines of his "Hymn for Christmas Day" show how a verse may be devout lyrical poetry and still not be a hymn; it is a "reading lyric," not a singing one:

> Awake my soul and come away!
> Put on thy best array:
> Lest if thou longer stay
> Thou lose some minutes of so blest a day.
> Go run
> And bid good morrow to the sun.

The use here of the first person singular mars the lines, not that there is the slightest objection to the first person *per se,* but the very fact that the holiday assemblage can say with the poet personally that they have on their best clothes destroys the figure in literalness. They *have* on their best clothes, and the fact is too personal and obvious to serve as a figure typifying spiritual elevation.

Death, the old serpent's son,
Thou hadst a sting, once, like thy sire,
Thou carried hell, and ever-burning fire,
But those black days are done.

Why is this expression of the idea impossible for good hymnody, while the following expression of it is matchless?

O Death, where is thy sting,
Where, grave, thy victory?

Isaac Watts clothes the idea thus poetically halfway between very good and very poor hymnody:

Say, "Live forever wondrous King!
Born to redeem the strong to save."
They ask the monster, "Where 's thy sting?"
"And where thy victory, boasting grave?"

The first lacks the essential dignity. It carried a hint of the mischief and humor of a school-boy's taunt. The last two lines of the stanza are too violent. The line in the second instance is a pure lyrical cry of triumph, in ultimate words.

In 1623 George Wither had brought out, under a patent from King James, the first approach to a real hymn-book of the Church of England. The patent reads:

James by the Grace of God. . . . To all and singular printers, booksellers, whereas, our well beloved subject, George Wither, gentleman, by his great industry and diligent study hath gathered and composed a book, entitled

Hymns and Songs of the Church, by him faithfully and briefly translated into lyric verse, which said book being esteemed worthy and profitable to be inserted in convenient manner and due place into every English Psalm book in meter. We give and grant full and free license power and privilege unto the said George Wither, his executors and assigns to imprint or cause to be imprinted for the term of fifty and one years, etc. Witness by ourselves at Westminster the 17th day of February. Reg. 20–1622–3.

Wither's hymn-book, while it was made up partly of "canonical" poems riming about as well as they could be rimed, was made up partly, too, of his own original compositions; and as he was now living in an age of "Psalms in meeter" for religious song exclusively, he had small success with the hymn-book. The people were not ready for the free hymns, and he was not himself ready to write successful ones. Not that Wither did not write good verses. He did write good religious poetry; and his book might have been sold to the reading public had not the Stationers' Company resented his having a patent and practically blocked the sale of the book. But Wither's poems are not quite hymns.

Of no small significance, however, is Wither as a hymnist. He had the taste to see that the metrical Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins were poor poetry, and he knew that something better was possible. He says in his "Scholar's Purgatory":

No man of understanding can sing many of these Psalms but with trouble to his devotion. . . . They are full of ab-

surdities, solecisms, improprieties, nonsense. . . . I do not disparage the pious endeavors of those who took pains in that translation, but rather commending their laborious and Christian intention, do acknowledge that, considering the times they lived in, and what quality they were, they made so worthy an attempt as justly to shame us, who came after to see it no better seconded during the flourishing times which have followed their troublesome age.

The other promising thing about Wither was the strenuousness and storminess of his life. Wither was a Church of England zealot, a soldier—first for Charles, then for Cromwell—and a politician. At different periods he spent much time in prison on coarse bread and water; he was deprived of all his property, and narrowly escaped hanging. Through it all burned his fire of religious zeal. This is the kind of soil and season in which the hymn best thrives. The main reason why Wither in his two best books of hymns—the other was "Halleluiah: or Britain's Second Remembrancer" (1641)—did not have one hymn such as Ambrose, the Bernards, Luther, or Wesley could write was that he lacked what may be termed the hymn sense. He had not quite the idea of what a good hymn is. He had no popular judgment to pass sympathetically upon his efforts and to furnish the communal feeling without which it seems impossible for a good hymn to be produced.

So the first hymn-book—not the psalm-book—of the Church of England failed, though it was approved and granted a patent by the king himself.

Although Elizabeth had authorized the singing of "hymns and such-like songs of worship" in the churches and cathedrals, it was not until the Restoration that there was any considerable singing of native hymns in modern England. All through this stretch of English history there was much singing of the measures of Sternhold and Hopkins and later of Tate and Brady. At the same time there were many religious songs written and set to music; but the singing of these songs in the churches was a rare occurrence. Many of the fine Elizabethan songs of piety were set to music; Sidney, Raleigh, Donne, and Herrick doubtless sang their quite lovely songs, but not in assemblages of public worship. Sir Thomas Browne gives one of his religious songs in "Religio Medici":

The night has come like to the day;
Depart not thou, great God, away.
Let not my sins, black as the night,
Eclipse the lustre of the light. . . .

Guard me 'gainst those watchful foes
Whose eyes are open while mine close;
Let no dream my head infest
But such as Jacob's temples blest. . . .

Sleep is a death; I make me try
By sleeping what it is to die!
And as gently lay my head
On my grave as on my bed.

Howe'er I rest, great God, let me
Awake again at last with thee.

And thus assured, behold I lie
Securely, or to wake or die.

These are my drowsy days: in vain
I do not wake to sleep again:
O come that hour when I shall never
Sleep again, but wake forever.

This is the dormitive I take to bedward; I need no other laudanum than this to make me sleep; after which I close my eyes in security, contented to take my leave of the sun, and sleep unto the resurrection.

Bishop Ken composed three hymns—one for morning, one for evening, one for midnight—and made it a custom to sing them himself to the viol or spinet. In his "Manual of Prayers for the use of the Scholars of Winchester College" (London, 1674), he says, "Be sure to sing the Morning and Evening hymn in your chamber devoutly." The two hymns were published in 1695, and have been growing in fame and power through these two centuries and a half. Compare them, "Awake My Soul, and with the Sun" and "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night," with this anonymous song of the seventeenth century:

There was a king of old
That did in Jewry dwell,
Whether a God or man or both,
I 'm sure I love him well.

Love him, why, who would not?
Did ever any wight
Not goodness, beauty, sweetness, love,
Nor comfort, love and light? . . .

There are so many fair
He 's lost among the throng;
Yet they who seek him nowhere else
May find him in a song.

I love him while I live.
To those that be his foes
Though I them hate, I wish no more
Than his dear love to lose.

This song has a certain charm about it, but one sees immediately that it would not do for the hymn-book. It is not in the hymn-book key. The contractions "I 'm" and "he 's" and the tinge of conversational argumentativeness in the use of "why" in the fifth line makes the piece too colloquial. The word "wight" even in the seventeenth century was beginning to be archaic and to carry a humorous connotation. The last stanza expressive of hatred of fellow-mortals is foreign to the spirit of the hymn-book of to-day. Hope for the damnation of other beings is not a Christian lyrical theme.

It is not very difficult to say why some given verse is essentially unfit for the hymn-book; it is more difficult to say why another verse is suitable. We may cite here as eminently hymnic a stanza of Bishop

Ken's. He himself evidently thought that this particular stanza was good hymnody, for he chose to end all three of his hymns with it. And his judgment has been confirmed by succeeding times. The stanza, often sung at the end of other hymns and often by itself, is beyond much doubt the most frequently sung of all English hymn stanzas:

> Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
> Praise him all creatures here below;
> Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
> Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Here at last, then, is an example of what the hymn-book of the Anglo-Saxon race designates as true hymnody—poetry appropriate to be sung in concert by men, women, and children of all classes and conditions, assembled for the solemn worship of God. Let us notice some of its qualities.

It expresses in the first place, simply, immediately, and harmoniously, the basic idea that assembles folk for public worship. To "praise God" is ostensibly what the people have met together for. The rest of the first line is a brief, straightforward, lyrical expression of the reason why people are called upon, and call upon one another, to worship God—"from whom all blessings flow." It is a simple statement of deep faith that there is a supreme being, the source of all good, the benign omnipotent force of the universe. The line is not only a statement of belief, but an *O Altitudo!* of emotion. It has, further, that magic of poetry whereby the words are so

broadly meaningful as to be the expression for all the persons in common, yet at the same time of so specific a meaning that they are the expression of the particular idea of every separate person. Probably no two minds will be thinking of the same thing by the word "blessings." It may mean to a farmer the warm sunlight on his crops; to a school-boy, a happy half-holiday; to some woman, that her boy has come safely home from sea; to some one else a more intangible kind of "blessing." It is simple, immediately clear, and expressive of profound meaning.

The second line,

Praise him all creatures here below,

may express to one mind the idea of the unity of all believers. For another mind it bears the idea of religious propaganda, missionary zeal, some such notion as, Let it be brought to pass that all people will know the truth and will give honor only to what is praiseworthy. For another mind it may express the idea of unity of nature, i. e., Let us recognize the fact that clouds and hills, birds, flowers, rivers, and seas speak of the majesty of the Creator. To another mind it may balance the idea, "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." To another it may be a call to acclaim a mystically known Supreme Being. To another the line is but a vague, grandly sounding succession of words that fit an undefined mood of elevation.

Praise him above, ye heavenly host,

brings to one mind the idea of saints and angels in heaven; to another mind the physical wonders of the sky called to witness the might and wisdom of the Creator, the stars singing together. To another it brings thoughts of his own dead whom he believes to be part of the heavenly host. All these meanings and more may be quite legitimately understood in the words. Again, the whole passage is a musical combination of words connoting great good, and affording full artistic enjoyment. The words are simple, clear, rich, musical, warm with emotion, immediately apparent to the intellect, and highly provocative of the imagination.

With all this it is a lyric easily perceived by the eye, and easily retained in the memory. A child can sing it with understanding, while the most wise and prudent can think over it quite fixedly and long—as an infinitely profound expression of the human mind. Grant that often the words are rolled out merely because they afford the singer's voice a smooth medium by which to float into harmony with other voices and the tones of the organ. Grant, too, that this or that one does not believe in any God or gods; the words still have something to engage his imagination if not his reason. To most of those who sing it it is true religion in the form of true poetry. It is lyrical in that it is an emotional outcry under harmonious control—control of measured cadence and rime. It is the outcry of one person so expressed as to be the cry of many. And, further, it is an individual cry so expressive of the

feelings of many that it becomes a corporate cry. Its terms are specific and at the same time general enough to incorporate a variety of shades of idea.

With the latter half of the seventeenth century there came a new form of lyrical poetry into the English tongue. All along through the centuries there had been much lyrical poetry written and sung, but it had not been of the peculiar type which is an individual lyrical expression of faith, hope, and charity, and is at the same time the corporate expression of assemblages of people. Soon England was to have a hymn-book, a collection of native upspringing lyrics, after the manner of the matchless Psalms, rich songs for choral expression, yet at the same time the expression of the deep feelings of individual hearts.

CHAPTER IV

ENGLISH PSALMODY

IN that strange poetical manifestation called psalmody the Psalms went through a test by way of translation into the English tongue that no other book of poetry ever experienced, and that none other could have stood, attesting in a hundred ways the perpetual vitality of those ancient lyrics and their inextinguishable beauty. In translations, many of which were crude to the extent of grotesqueness, their lyric beauty and their spiritual power still moved deeply the hearts of a whole nation for generations. There were exquisite translations of many of the Psalms; but the translation in which they caught the ear of the English people, that of Sternhold and Hopkins, was not exquisite. Yet no other book except the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer ever went through so many editions and printings as did the Sternhold and Hopkins's "Psalms in Meter." Probably no other book was ever so roughly—although devoutly—handled in translation as the Psalms; surely no other book of songs ever so went to the heart of the nation.

The Psalms in meter first sprang into prominence not in England nor in Germany but in France, at the court of Francis I. The gallant and facile court

poet, Clement Marot, was once urged by some one that in place of his "profane" verses he should turn the Psalms into the sprightly verse form of which he was so clearly a master. In 1533 that "poet of princes and prince of poets" began his versification. Within a few years he had published fifty-two of the Psalms constructed after the manner of his songs. And they caught the French ear as quickly as his songs had done. Printed without tunes, they were set to popular ballad airs and became enormously fashionable and popular. Soon the king and queen and notables of the realm had each selected a favorite psalm and set it to a favorite air. Prince Henry the Dauphin chose one for himself beginning,

Ainsi qu 'on vit le cerf bruyere,

to sing as he rode hunting. This is the forty-second Psalm, rendered a century and a half later by Tate and Brady in England,

As pants the hart for cooling streams,

The king of Navarre selected the psalm beginning,

Revenge moy prens la querelle.

Catharine de' Medici chose one for herself, and also procured a copy of the Bible. The king of Spain sent gifts to the poet requesting a special versification of his favorite Psalm. The austere John Calvin was charmed by the songs, and Marot's wish came true, that the boatmen and wagoners and har-

vesters might make France ring with the pious ditties. Calvin at Geneva employed the best musical talent he could find and set Marot's verses to better music. D'Israeli in his "Curiosities of Literature" describes the consternation among orthodox leaders of France when these Psalms appeared in the "Geneva Hymn Book":

> Now the Cardinal of Lorraine found that the reigning court beauty, Diane de Poictiers, not only was singing them but following the lead of Catherine de Medici, had got a Bible. Having thrown the Bible down and condemned it, he (the cardinal) remonstrated with the fair penitent that it was a kind of reading not adapted to her sex, containing dangerous matters: if she is uneasy in her mind she should hear two masses instead of one and rest contented with her Pater Nosters and her Primer, which were not only devotional but ornamented with a variety of elegant forms, from the most exquisite pencils of France.

Marot under the persecution of the church fled to Geneva, where he continued his translations. He died in 1544. Theodore de Beza continued the work, removing from Marot's songs any unseemly gaieties and fashionable allusions. This book, "Les Psaumes mis en rime françois par Clement Marot et Theodore de Beza," became one of the most famous books of the age. It was translated into nine different languages, including the Hebrew. David Breed, in his "History and Use of Hymns," states that it passed through at least one thousand editions.

Marot's influence was never so strongly felt in England as it was on the Continent, though he seems to have given to the Reformation generally the idea of versifying the Psalter. In England appeared a book by Myles Coverdale, the great translator of the Bible, "Goostly Psalmes and Spiritual Songes drawen out of the holy scripture for the Comforte and Consolacyon of such as love to reioyse in God and his words." Bishop Coverdale spent much time at Geneva, first as a scholar, later as a refugee during the reign of Mary. The hymns of his book are mainly from the German, rather than after the models of Marot. In the address to the reader, Coverdale repeats Marot's pious wish about psalm-singing:

Yea, would God that our Minstrels had no other thing to play upon, neither our carters and plowmen other thing to whistle upon, save psalms, hymns, and other godly songs such as David is occupied withal! And if women, sitting at their rocks or spinning at their wheels had none other songs to pass their time withal, than such as Moses's sister, Glehanna's wife, Deborah, and Mary, mother of Christ have sung before them they would be better occupied than *hey nony nony, hey troly loly* and such like phantasies. If young men also that have the gift of singing took their pleasure in such wholesome ballads as the three children in his last chapter, it were a token that they felt some spark of God's love in their hearts . . . for truly as we love so sing we. . . . As for the common sort of ballads which now are used in the world, I report me to every good man's conscience what wicked fruits they bring.

This book contained fifteen Psalms, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the "Magnificat," in rime, and twenty pieces less directly taken from the Scriptures.

Stanzas of Coverdale's one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm will indicate the plain, prosaic earnestness of style of the book:

> Blessed are all that feare the Lorde,
> Worshyppyng hym nyghte and daye,
> Ordrynge theyr lyfe after his worde
> And walking ever in his waye.

One of the original hymns begins with this stanza:

> O, hevenly Lorde thy goodly worde
> Hath long been kept away from us;
> But throrow thy grace, now in our dayes
> Thou hast showed the so plenteous,
> That very well we can now tell
> What thy apostles have written al
> And now we see thy words opēly
> Hath given antychrist a great fall.

In these uncouth verses we see two patterns of church song: one, after the idea of Calvin, adhering literally to the biblical text; the other, after the idea of Luther, not necessarily dependent upon biblical phraseology. Till the beginning of the eighteenth century England and Scotland followed mainly the idea of Calvin.

"Goostly Psalmes" was published in 1539, and though the ban placed upon it was removed not long

thereafter the book seems never to have gone far in England. Coverdale's power in shaping English history was not exerted through his hymn-book.

But if neither the metrical Psalms nor the hymns of Coverdale took much hold in England, there was soon to follow a metrical Psalter that did take hold.

The young king, Edward VI, one day overheard a courtier, Thomas Sternhold, playing on the organ and singing "for his own godly solace some Psalms which he had turned into meter and set to music." The king was pleased. Soon thereafter was published and dedicated to him, "Certayne Psalmes chosē out of the Psalter of David and drawē into English Metre by Thomas Sternhold groome of ye Kyng's Maiestie's roobes." There is a copy of this undated first edition in the British Museum. It contains nineteen Psalms. In 1549, after Sternhold's death, a second edition was published containing thirty-seven Psalms. Another edition followed with seven added Psalms by John Hopkins. Thus arose the Old Version of the Psalms. Additions were made by Hopkins and others till all the Psalms were translated. The title of the edition of 1564 reads:

The whole book of psalmes collected into Englyshe Meter by Thomas Sternhold, J. Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Hebrew, with apt notes to sing them withal faythfully perused and allowed according to thorder appointed in the Queenes Maisties Iniunctions. Very meete to be used of all sorts of people privately for their godly solace and comfort laying apart all ungodly songes and ballades, whych tend to the nourishing of vyce and corrupting of

youth. Whereunto is a short introduction to learn to synge the Psalmes.

Thus came a book, curiously one of the most widely popular that England ever saw. By 1600 it had passed through more than fifty editions. There are now in the British Museum, dated between 1564 and 1841, copies of about six hundred and fifty separate editions of this book.

The verses are rugged, frequently crude, sometimes absurd, and in rare instances charming. They are in the ranks of poetry, one might say, somewhat like the tassels of corn in the realm of flowers, dun in hue, not very fragrant, and their connection with rich stores of corn not at once apparent. The verses lumber and jolt along like a loaded ox-cart; but with the jolting one can hardly fail to notice the heart-of-oak sturdiness and strength of mind and spirit that is in them.

Sternhold's version of the twenty-third Psalm may be taken as fairly representative, though it is much better than some parts of the book:

My shepherd is the liuing God, nothing therefore I neede;
In pastures faire with waters calme he set me for to feede.

He did conuert and glad my soule, and brought my mind
in frame:
To walke in paths of righteousness for his most holy name.

Yea though I walk in vale of death, yet will I feare no ill;
Thy rod and staff doth comfort me, and thou art with me
still.

And in the presence of my foes, my table thou shalt spread:
Thou shalt O Lord fill up my cup, and eke anoint my head.

Through all my life thy favor is, so frankly showed to me
That in thy house foreurmore, my dwelling place shall be.

The following is part of Hopkins's rendering of the forty-second Psalm; Hopkins states in a short preface that he knows that his verses are not to be compared with Sternhold's "most exquisite doynges"; and he is not quite as good as Sternhold:

Like as the hart doth breath and bray, the wellspring to obtain:
So doth my soule desire alway, with thee Lord, to remaine.

My soule doth thirst and would draw neare, the liuing God of might:
O when shall I come and appear, in presence of his sight?

The tears all times are my repast, which from mine eyes did slide:
The wicked men cry out so fast, where now is God my guide?

Alas what griefs is his to thinke, what freedome once I had:
Therefore my soul is at pits brinke, is most heauie and sad.

The spirit of poetry wore strange garb in those days. But clad thus in hodden-gray, she crossed countless thresholds over which she otherwise could not have entered at all as a ministrant of hope and courage and ideals of upright life. These verses were written before the time of Elizabethan splendor, and are a product of sturdy England yet untransformed by the Renaissance. In spite of the

ridicule leveled at them through two hundred years, and in spite of their openness to ridicule, they exerted an enormous influence in the shaping of modern England.

Ruskin says that as poetry they are "half paralytic, half profane, consisting partly of the expression of what the singers never in their lives felt or attempted to feel; and partly in the address of prayers to God which nothing could more disagreeably astonish than his attending to."[1] But Ruskin says in the same book with equal unreason, "The general mass of amiably and pleasantly religious persons can no more understand a Psalm than a kitten a Greek tragedy." The generations of sturdy folk who sang the plain honest rimes of "Sternhold and Hopkins" knew, and felt in their hearts, what they were singing. And, whatever faults these folks might have had, over amiability and softness were not among them. They knew quite well what a psalm was and what they meant when they sang it.

An idea of the great prevalence and sway of the metrical Psalm in England may be gained from details such as a bill for books rendered by Thomas Sternhold, royal printer to King Henry VIII.[2] Of the forty-four items on the king's bill for books eleven items are copies of the Psalms. One reads:

[1] "Rock Honeycomb, Broken pieces of Sir Philip Sidney's Psalter Laid up in Store for English Homes", "The Works of John Ruskin," ed. Cook and Wedderburne, Vol. XXXI, p. 116.

[2] Published in "Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers," Vol II, p. 51. Privately printed, London, 1875.

Item delivered to the kinges highness for a little *Psalter* taken out of one book and setting in another in the same place, and for gorgious bynding of the same book xijd and to the Goldsmythe for the taking off of the clasps and corners and for setting them ageyn xvjd Summa ijs, iiijd.

This glimpse into the king's book buying indicates that the Psalter was a favorite gift-book, and that the heavy but sturdy paraphrase would find favor in the most exalted circles as well as among the common people.

Of course the princes and scholars had not so much needed the translations. The Psalms in Latin were familiar and dear to the hearts of many. The example of Sir Thomas More may not perhaps be cited as typical of learned England in his day, but it is significant. He recited every morning seven of the Psalms in Latin—Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 148. In the boat on his way toward the Tower—and the block—he was singing psalms; and thereby, he told his son-in-law, William Roper, he "gave the devil a foul fall indeed."

But the Psalms were wanted in the common tongue, and the poets from Wyatt and Surrey on had been turning them into meter—none so agreeable to popular taste, however, as Sternhold and Hopkins. Their metrical Psalter was to bring into English familiar life the greatest of all song-books, and bring it in the homely honest guise of popular song. The Psalter was to be more than merely a book for "gorgious bynding." In the Sternhold

and Hopkins translation it was to prove one of the mighty books of England.

Bishop Jewel in a letter dated March 6, 1560, says:

A change appeared now more vividly among the people. Nothing promoted it more than the inviting of the people to sing psalms. That was begun in one church and did quickly spread itself not only through the city but in the neighboring places; sometimes at St. Paul's Cross there will be six thousand people singing together.

These metrical Psalms were set to music by the leading musicians of the time, Tallis and Byrd and John Milton, father of the poet. Many of their airs are still familiar in the hymn-books. The Psalms were sung also to popular street tunes, "Greensleeves" for example, as *Mistress Ford* tells in "Merry Wives." Says Masson in his great "Life of Milton," concerning the Psalm music of Milton's father:

"The tenor part of York tunes," we are told by Sir John Hopkins, "was so well known that within memory half the nurses in England were used to sing it by way of a lullaby" and the chimes of many country churches had "played it six or eight times in four-and-twenty hours from time immemorial." And so apart from all that the scrivener of Broad Street has given us through his son, there yet rests in the air of Britain, capable of being set loose wherever church-bells send their chimes over an English or Scottish fire-side, some portion of the soul of the admirable man and his love of sweet sounds.

There are a great number of religious songs and paraphrases and many volumes issued, such as, for example, William Hunnis' "Seven Sobs of a Sorrowful Soul for Sin," 1559. Portions of the Book of Genesis were turned into rime with the title, "A Hive Full of Honey"; another book was "A Handful of Honeysuckles: Blessings out of Deuteronomy." These titles hint why the sober Sternhold prevailed.

John Donne said that religious song must not be bedizened. Archbishop Parker's version of the Psalms, 1557, had something of that fault. His rendering of the twenty-third Psalm begins:

> To feed my neede: he will me leade
> To pastures green and fat:
> He forth brought me: in libertie
> To waters delicate.

The following lines constitute the first stanza of the "De Profundis" of George Gascoigne:

> From depths of dole wherein my soule dooth dwell,
> From heavie heart which harbors in my breast,
> From troubled sprite which seldom taketh rest
> From hope of heaven, from dreade of darksome hell,
> O gracious God, my lovely Lorde alone,
> To thee I call, to thee I make my mone
> And thou good God, vouchsafe us gree to take
> This woeful plaint
> Wherein I faint:—
> O hear me then for thy great mercy's sake.

The court musician, William Byrd, issued in 1558 his "Sonnets and Songs of Sadness and Piety." The verses are too involved and fanciful for hymnody:

> If that a sinner's sighs be Angel's food
> Or that repentant tears be Angel's wine,
> Accept, O Lord, in this most pensive mood
> These hasty sighs and tears of mine
> That went with Peter forth most sinfully
> But not with Peter wept most bitterly.

A stanza from Sir Philip Sidney's version of the nineteenth Psalm—"More than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than the honey and the honeycomb":

> Then what men would so soon seke gold,
> Or glittering golden money?
> By them is past, in sweetest tast,
> Honey and combe of honey.

Throughout the Elizabethan period there was a great deal of religious lyrical verse, and much effort was spent upon it. In his "Defense of Poesy," Sidney says:

> How well it [lyrical poetry] may be employed and with what heavenly fruits both public and private singing the praises of the immortal goodness of that God which giveth us hands to write and wits to conceive!

A stanza from Francis Davidson's twenty-third Psalm is as follows:

He feedeth me in fields that beene
Fresh and greene,
Mottled with Spring's flowery painting;
Through which creeps with murmuring Crookes
Christall brookes
To refresh my spirits fainting.

The following lines from a paraphrase of the fourteenth Psalm are attributed to Queen Elizabeth:

Fooles, that true faith yet never had,
Sayth in their hearts, there is no God!
Fylthy they are in their practyse,
Of them not one is godly wyse.

Another example of religious lyrical verse may be cited here, that of Mary, Queen of Scots, who wrote in her book of devotions just before her execution a Latin hymn of which these lines are typical:

Longuendo, gemendo, et genuflectendo,
Adoro, imploro, ut liberas me!

The one hundred and fourth Psalm as translated by King James I begins:

Thy mercy will I sing & justice eke
With music will I prayse Iehove great
I will tak heed and righteous path to seik
Till time thou call me to Thy mercy seat.
Still shall I wake in uprightness of soule
Within my house which hallowed is to The,
Mine eyes upon no wicked thing shall roule,
For all such deides I hate & shall thaime flee.

Why it was necessary to turn Psalms into "versification" is a question. Why should not the two superb renderings, that of the Prayer-Book and that of the King James Bible suffice? Why were the powerful and beautiful rhythms of those renderings superseded by the astonishing Psalms in Meetre that were brought out in such endless profusion?

One might be inclined to say that some of this fantastic riming of the Psalms was an outcropping of the otherwise suppressed human playfulness and frivolity of the Puritans; though the gay Cavaliers jingled them, too, not confining themselves to common meter. Of course Psalms in the ballad form were easily learned and kept in memory. And in the days when the ability to read was less general than now, these rimes, scattered so freely broadcast, took root in many a mind and contributed powerfully to the righteousness and stability of the nation.

And though the verses appear uncouth to us, they were effective poetry to the folk who made and sang them. One cannot believe that the Covenanters would have marched to battle and to the stake singing what to their minds was grotesque.

Poetry is always changing its garb and manner, so that the poetic fashion pleasing to one generation may not be so to another. Reams of heroic couplets were not tiresome to Dryden and his age, but Chaucer and Shakspere were. There is no question that the lovers of the metrical Psalms found much poetical and spiritual nurture in them, even in

such volumes as that brought out by Dr. William Loe, in 1620: "An Hymn or song of seuen strains or strings set to the tune of seuen sobs, and sighs of a seuen times seuen sad souls for sinne, and is to be song to the tune of 'I lift mine eyes to thee.'"

One stanza of Dr. Loe's book is enough to indicate his style:

O God if thou wouldst waighe
My waise and take a veue
I could not scape thy rod
Thy wrath I should it rue.

Crashaw's translations, published twenty-eight years later, are different, as may be seen in the lines rendering: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters":

Happy me, O happy sheep!
Whom my God vouchsafes to keep;
Even my God, even he it is
That points me to those paths of bliss;

On whose pastures cheerful Spring
All the year doth sit and sing
And rejoicing smiles to see
Their green backs wear his livery.

At my feet the blubbering mountain
Weeping, melts into a fountain,
Whose soft, silver-sweating streams
Make high noon forget his beams.

The twenty-third Psalm has been translated and paraphrased, we may suppose, more than any other piece of literature in the world. It makes its way down through English history, expressed variously as the times have passed, and as various persons such as King Alfred, Milton, and Byron in their turn, and as innumerable peasants, clerks, courtiers, poets, and scholars have rendered it, changing as the language has been changed, yet bearing always the same happy and sure faith in the Good Shepherd. It is itself a water-brook of poetry by whose banks are grateful shade and green pastures. To read a single passage of this Psalm in a few of its English forms will suggest to the imagination something of what it has meant to English folk in town and country-side, in cottage and manor-house and palace through successive generations. The first of these passages are taken from "Biblical Versions of Divine Hymns," collected by Wilmot Marsh, London, 1845.

> And if I go in shades of ded
> For thou with me art, me sal euels dred?
> *The Edgerton MS. dated* 1270.

For win ghif I hadde goo in myddil of shadewe of deeth; I shall not dreede yuels for thou art with me. Thi gheerde and thy staf; thei have comforted me.
The Hampole MS. in the British Museum.

For whi and if I goo in the myddel of the shadewe of deth I shal not drede euelis, for thou art with me.
The Wyclif Bible, 1380.

Ye, if I shuld go thorow the myddes of deth, yet will I feare non yuel, for thou art with me, thy staffe and thy shepe hoke counfort me.

A MS. of 1530, *in the Cambridge University Library.*

For albe it I shulde go unto the valye of the dedely shadewe, yet I fere none euyll, for thou art with me.

Yea, in deathes shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear:
For thou art with me: and thy rod
To guide, my staff to bear.

Yea, though I walk in vale of death, yet will I fear none ill:
Thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me, and thou art with me still.

Thomas Sternhold.

The version of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke leaves the common meters for more elaborate verse form:

He me revives: leads me the way
Which righteousnes doth take
For his name's sake.
Yea, though I should through valleys stray
Of deathes darke shade, I will
No whitt feare ill.

It may be said that this version of the Psalm does not add to the poetic reputation of these two magnificent persons. Their desire to improve upon Sternhold was admirable; but they hardly attained

it. The same attempt later, by King James I, was for various reasons even less successful.

Sternhold's metrical translation, published at Geneva in 1556, begins:

> The lord is onlye my support,
> And he that doth me feed;
> How can I then lack anything,
> Whereof I stand in need.
>
> He doth me foulde in cottes most safe,
> And tender grass fast by;
> And after dryveth me to the streams
> Which run most pleasantly.

The best known translations, excepting of course the two matchless unmetrical versions, that of the King James Bible and that of the English Prayer-Book, are the famous Scottish paraphrase beginning,

> The Lord 's my shepherd, I 'll not want,

and the one of Sir Henry Baker:

> The king of love my shepherd is
> Whose goodness faileth never;
> I nothing lack if I am his,
> And he is mine forever.
>
> Where streams of living water flow,
> My ransomed soul he leadeth,
> And where the verdant pastures grow,
> With food celestial feedeth.
>
> Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
> And yet in love he sought me,

And on his shoulders gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
With thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house forever.

The old version of the Psalms held its place till the end of the seventeenth century, never seriously disturbed. But at this point there appeared a new publication which indicated the improving popular taste and new freedom of thought, and at the same time the deep-set popular affection for the old literal versification of the Psalms. From the first there has been much individual dissatisfaction with the uncouthness of Sternhold and Hopkins. Queen Elizabeth had treated them with humorous toleration. Many attempts had been made to furnish the church with better renderings. Among the large numbers of metrical renderings of the Psalms, in part or entire, may be mentioned those of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke, Edmund Spenser, John Donne, Phineas Fletcher, George Herbert, Lord Bacon, King James I, George Sandys, George Wither, Francis Rous, and Henry Vaughan. Milton translated nineteen of the Psalms into meter.

But none of these had seriously molested the reign of "Sternhold and Hopkins" until Nahum Tate, the poet laureate under William and Mary, in collaboration with Nicholas Brady, issued a complete new version; that was in 1696. The New Version, or Tate and Brady as it was thereafter known, was dedicated to the king and authorized by royal order.

It was greeted with bitter denunciation and with enthusiastic approval, and yet by a third party with measured approval as constituting a distinct advance over the Old Version, and looking forward to something better. The Supplement, issued separately in 1700, contained the Canticles, six hymns, and many new tunes. This book, added to gradually, went through many editions in the first decades of the new century, and became a prototype of the modern hymn-book. The New Version did not replace the Old; among the more urbane it did, but in the country districts "Sternhold and Hopkins" persisted till the hymn-book supplanted both versions.

Conservatives saw in Tate and Brady's Psalter a dangerous tendency to depart from the biblical text, and to abandon solid virtue for doubtful refinement. The Bishop of St. Asaph wrote:

> Whereas the Composers and Reviewers of the Old translations had nothing else in their Eye but to give us the true sense of each piece in as few words as could be in Verse and, therefore keep close to the text, without deviating from it on any account. In this New Translation there is so much regard had to the poetry, the Style of Running of the

Verse and such-like inconsiderable circumstances, that it is almost impossible to avoid going from the text and altering the true sense and Meaning of it. For, thence it comes to pass, that although the Authors doubtless designed a true Translation yet other things crowding into their Heads at the same time jostled that Design so that it could not always take effect.

In the established church as well as among the Non-Conformists the New Version aroused new and heated disputes whether it were lawful, after all, for the people, especially the women, to sing in church, and whether any sort of "human composure" were fit to be sung in public. Isaac Watts welcomed it, saying in the preface to his "Horæ Lyricæ": "Some people persuade themselves and their children that the beauties of poetry are vain and dangerous. All that arises a degree above Mr. Sternhold is too airy for worship."

The Old Version and the New Version served their time. So far as popular favor and influence are concerned "Sternhold and Hopkins" was one of the three great books of England for the two centuries. "Tate and Brady" in its turn exerted a tremendous influence. But the freer and more poetic hymnbook was in its time gradually to replace these and all other metrical versions such as Ainsworth in Scotland and New England, though nothing is likely ever to drive out the Psalms of the glorious King James Version.

CHAPTER V

ISAAC WATTS

THE great hymns of the world have appeared in time of religious turmoil and struggle. The rule would seem to have an exception in the case of Isaac Watts, one of the two greatest of English hymnists, and the man who more than any other established the hymn as a type of English poetry; for the most of Watts's mature life was spent in scholarly quiet at the country home of Sir Thomas Abney. But most of his hymns sprang out of the days of stress and struggle while he was yet a young man. Isaac Watts was a child of religious strife and sacrifice. He lived in strenuous times and came of stalwart stock. His grandfather, a commander in the British fleet, once killed a tiger in a fight, with his bare hands. Leaping into a river, he turned upon the tiger, which had sprung out of the jungle upon him, seized it by the head, and drowned it. That was the same kind of courage and clearness of head that the grandson in his day was called upon to exercise in battles of ideas and principles. Watts's maternal grandfather, a French Protestant, had clung to his religious convictions under persecution, and had taken refuge with his family in England. As a baby Isaac Watts was

nursed and sung to sleep by his gentle yet stout-hearted mother sitting on a horse-block under a window of the Southampton jail, where her husband was imprisoned for loyalty to his faith. Something of the quality of the soul of the elder Watts is shown by a letter written under banishment a few years later to his children. Not a word is said about shelter, food, or safety, but, "My children pray God to give you a knowledge of his truth, for it is a very dangerous time you are like to live in." Mr. Thomas Wright in his "Life of Isaac Watts" tells a story of Isaac's childhood which gives a glimpse of an English fireside of the time, as well as of an unusual child. Little Isaac tittered out once during family prayer. The grave household later heard his confession that, seeing a mouse run up a bell-rope which hung by the fireplace, he made the rime:

> A mouse for want of better stairs,
> Ran up a rope to say his prayers.

Isaac's youth was strenuous. The young Non-Conformist was learning Greek and Hebrew at eight years old. He was of frail physique and had to battle not only for his religious and intellectual life but for physical life as well.

His experience was no exception to the rule that hymns grow best in soil that is much and deeply stirred. At that time when Puritan strictness and rigor were increasing without the deep Puritan piety, Watts stood for gentleness, charity, and free-

dom. In that age of conformity, he was vigorously independent, stanchly loyal to his own opinions. In the age of Congreve, Wycherley, Butler, Gay, and Swift, Watts was developing a warm and devout religious life. It is a curious fact and an added honor to him that out of the most unideal period of English history came one of the most beautiful child-songs of the world, his "Hush, My Child, Lie Still and Slumber." He stands out as a loyal figure in times of very lax ideas, and a gentle and kindly man in an age of cold cynicism.

As a Puritan he is somewhat between the scholarly Milton and the untutored Bunyan. Watts was an eminent scholar and man of letters in his time and a philosopher and theologian of large following; his "Improvement of the Mind" and his "Speculation on the Human Nature of the Logos" were famous books. His "Logic" and his text-books on geography and astronomy were being used at the close of the seventeenth century in the universities of England and at Harvard and Yale. Julian in his "Dictionary of Hymnology" says that the "Logic" "was still a valued textbook at Oxford within living memory." But his permanent literary appeal is of a very simple, if very fundamental, nature. As a poet, he might unloose the latchet of Milton's shoe; for sustained literary power, he is a very long way behind Bunyan. But because of the simplicity and universality of his appeal and the sweet and clear soundness of it, he stands out as a very influential

figure. It is a great thing to have written a nation's hymns.

Personally one of the gentlest and kindest of men, he was nevertheless a bold, sturdy figure and an incalculably useful liberal of eighteenth-century England. He was the object of great veneration as well as fierce attack. "A moderate man," he once said, "must expect a box on both ears."

Judging by the following stanzas for his poem, "On the Sight of Queen Mary in the Year 1694," he was no inconsiderable courtier:

Her shape, her motion and her mien,
All heavenly such as angels seem,
When the bright vision grows intense,
And fancy aids our feebler sense.

Earth's proudest idol dare not vie,
With such superior majesty;
A kindling vapor might as soon
Rise from the bogs and mate the moon.

I 'll call no Raphael from his rest;
Such charm can never be expressed;
Pencil and paint were never made
To draw pure light without a shade. . . .

Secure of empire, she might lay
Her crown, her robes of state away,
And midst ten thousand nymphs be seen;
Her beauty would proclaim the queen.

In 1707 Watts published his "Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Imitation of the Psalms." Since that date, and only since then, have the English people been in conscious possession of a worthy native hymn-book. This book established the free congregational hymn for the English language.

By the word "imitation" in his title Watts did not mean copying the letter of the Psalms but rather a bold and original departure. The rule heretofore for the Psalms in the English was that the original should be literally, meticulously followed. George Wither had defended his own Psalms as being exact translations "having still the relish of holy words." Contemners, he said therefore, "do not only contemn my pains but do lay imputations upon the wisdom of the Holy Ghost also. . . . And to say any fragment thereof were needless is, in effect, to diminish from God's word, upon which follows a heavy curse."

It is strange that the revolutionary stand of Watts did not arouse far stronger and more lasting opposition. It was asked by an opponent, "Does Dr. Watts indeed presume to correct and instruct the Holy Ghost in writing Psalms?" But Watts's good sense and the lyric charm of his verse carried the day against the letter which killeth, for the spirit which keepeth alive.

In 1715 he published another book of hymns, "Divine Songs." In 1719 he published his "Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament." This book may be said to have settled

finally though not immediately the long argument about psalmody. Watts had taken up the fight for a broader freedom in the matter of worship, and championed a new liberalism in thought and action. In the preface to the book of 1719 he makes the important distinction between translating the hymns of David and imitating them.

For why should I now address God my Saviour in a song, with *Burnt Sacrifices of Fatlings,* and with the *Incense of Rams?* Why should I pray to be *sprinkled with Hysop,* or recur to the *Blood of Bullocks and Goats?* Why should I *bind my sacrifice with cords to the Horns of an Altar,* or sing the praises of God to *high sounding Cymbals,* when the gospel has shewn me a nobler Atonement for Sin, and appointed a purer and more spiritual worship? Why must I join with David in his Legal or Prophetic language to curse my Enemies when my Saviour by his Sermons has taught me to bless them? . . .

David would have thought it very hard to have been confined to the words of Moses, and sung nothing else on all his rejoicing days but the drowning of Pharaoh in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis. . . .

Have not your Spirits taken wing and mounted up near to God and Glory with the song of David on your tongue? But on a sudden the clerk has proposed the next line to your lips with Sayings and Prophesies, with Burnt Offerings and Hysop, with New Moons and Trumpets and Timbrels in it, with Confessions of Sins which you never committed, with Complaints of Sorrows which you never felt, cursing such Enemies as you never had. . . . Where the Psalmist has described Religion by Fear of God, I have joined Faith and love to it.

These Psalms are more important as setting a new pattern and establishing a new liberal idea than for their own poetic quality. They are as a rule not very good poetry, though among them are several of the great hymns of the world. One feels in reading these verses that Watts could turn out the ordinary hymn meters with too great ease. Still, without the practice of writing hundreds of hymns he might not have attained to the twelve or fifteen matchless ones that he did write.

His rendering of the nineteenth Psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork," may be taken as fairly typical of Watts's Psalms.

Behold the lofty Sky
Declares its Maker God;
And all his starry works on high
Proclaim his Power abroad.

The darkness and the light
Still keep their course the same,
While night to day, and day to night
Divinely teach his name.

In every different land
Their general voice is known;
They show the wonders of his hand,
The orders of his throne.

Ye British lands, rejoice,
He here reveals his word;

We are not left to Nature's voice
To bid us know the Lord.

His statutes and commands
Are set before our eyes;
He puts the Gospel in our hands
Where our salvation lies.

His laws are just and pure,
His truth without deceit,
His promises are ever sure,
And his rewards are great.

Not honey to the taste
Affords so much delight,
Not gold that has the furnace passed
So much allures the sight.

While of thy works I sing,
Thy glory to proclaim,
Accept the praise, my God and King,
In my Redeemer's name.

These stanzas move along on a level with such seeming ease that the reader feels Watts might write such verses indefinitely. Indeed, he did make three versions of this Psalm, as of many others, one in short, one long, and one in common meter. The long-meter version begins:

The heavens declare the glory, Lord,
In every star thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold thy Word
We read thy name in fairer lines.

These stanzas may seem to represent Watts's poetical level. It is plain as bread. Here is poesy clad in Quaker brown. But, after all, in these unpretentious lines there was found much to employ worthily the minds of those who sang them. And out of the labor and devotion exerted in the making of all these verses there come some lyrical poems that for their hold on the hearts of people have never been excelled by anything written in English.

In 1715 Watts issued what was to be one of the notable children's books of the English language. From reading the child-books of Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, and Robert Louis Stevenson, one might—if Watts's had not been a household book before these writers were born—make various speculations as to what kind of book for children could come from a Puritan doctor of divinity, contemporary of Butler and Congreve and Swift.

"Dear friends," writes Watts in the preface, "to all that are concerned in the Education of Children." "It is an awful and important charge that is committed to you. The wisdom and welfare of succeeding generations are intrusted with you. . . . There is something so entertaining in rhyme and meter that it will incline children to make this part of their duty a diversion."

Watts's idea of educating by means of diversion and his book of verses probably appealed as little to the mind of the contemporary English schoolmaster as to that of John Gay. These verses are to our ears curiously old-fashioned and didactic

for children's poetry. But still they have a note that appeals to universal childhood. Song IV begins:

> When'er I take my walks abroad,
> How many poor I see!
> What shall I render to my God
> For all his gifts to me?
>
> Not more than others I deserve,
> Yet God hath given me more,
> For I have food while others starve
> Or beg from door to door.

Song V has a patriotic note:

> I would not change my native land
> For rich Peru with all her gold;
> A nobler prize lies in my hand
> Than East or Western Indies hold.

The third line here is Doctor Watts's expression and not that of a child. The first stanza of Song VI, "Praise from the Gospel," suited the young Calvinist and the young Britisher:

> Lord, I ascribe it to thy grace
> And not to chance as others do
> That I was born of Christian race
> And not a heathen or a Jew.

A stanza from Song XII shows that Watts would not have the children pampered:

Happy the child whose youngest years
Receive instruction well;
Who hates the sinner's path and fears
The road that leads to hell.

And one from Song XIII:

'T is dangerous to provoke a God:
His power and vengeance none can tell;
One stroke of his almighty rod
Shall send young sinners quick to hell.

One cannot say how much practical effect Song XVI, "Against Quarrelling and Fighting," has had, but generation after generation has learned the admonition. The idea of the last two lines is obvious and simple enough for very young children to grasp immediately; but what a world this would be indeed if mature minds could grasp and apply its spirit!

Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 't is their nature to.

But, children, you should never let
Such angry passions rise;
Your little hands were never made
To tear each others' eyes.

These lines from Song XVII, "Love between Brothers and Sisters," somehow have the ring of true child literature:

Birds in their little nests agree;
And 't is a shameful sight
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide and fight.

From Song XX, "Against Idleness and Mischief":

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

The hymns of Watts are distinguished by a certain Calvinistic logic, by boldness of conception and expression and by an austere spirit of reverence. The best known hymn of Watts, "O God Our Help in Ages Past," based on the ninetieth Psalm, was published in 1719. It is given here as it was then printed:

Our God, our Help in Ages past,
Our Hope for years to come,
Our Shelter from the stormy blast,
And our Eternal Home.

Under the Shadow of thy Throne,
Thy Saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thy Arm alone,
And our Defence is sure.

Before the Hills in order stood,
Or Earth received her Frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless Years the same.

Thy Word commands our flesh to Dust,
Return ye sons of Men;
All Nations rose from Earth at first,
And turned to Earth again.

A Thousand Ages in thy Sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the Watch that ends the Night,
Before the rising Sun.

[The busy tribes of Flesh and Blood
With all their Lives and Cares,
Are carried downwards by thy flood
And lost in following years.

Time like an ever-rolling Stream
Bears all its Sons away;
They fly forgotten as a Dream
Dies at the opening Day.

Like flow'ry Fields the Nations Stand
Pleased with the Morning Light;
The Flowers beneath the mower's Hand
Lie withering e'er 't is Night.]

Our God, our Help in Ages past,
Our Hope for years to come,
Be thou our Guard while Troubles last,
And our Eternal Home.

Virtually every hymn-book of the recent day has taken the same liberty with his poem that Watts himself took with the Psalms, the liberty to make

changes or adaptations. "The English Hymnal"[1] omits stanzas 4, 6, and 8. It supplies "O" for "our" in the first line of stanzas 1 and 9. "Hymns Ancient and Modern" makes the same changes. "The Methodist Hymnal" omits stanzas 4 and 8; It changes line 2, stanza 2, to

Still may we dwell secure

and line 2, stanza 6, to

With all their *cares* and *fears.*

This is a clear improvement, correcting a defective rime and improving the sense. "The Baptist Hymn Book" omits stanzas 5, 6, 7, and 8. It supplies the word "Beneath" for the line

Under the shadow of thy throne.

"The Plymouth Hymn Book" omits stanzas 4, 6, and 8. "The Unitarian Hymn and Tune Book" omits stanzas 2, 4, 6, and 8. The Presbyterian hymn-book omits stanzas 4 and 8, and changes "downwards" to "downward" in line 3, stanza 5. "The Union Hymnal"[2] omits stanzas 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. It supplies "Beneath" for "Under" in line 1, stanza 2, and in line 2 writes

Thy children dwell secure.

Every book examined except two supplies "O" for "Our." Any small change such as these which

[1] The Oxford Press, London, 1914.

[2] Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1914.

makes the hymn really better would doubtless have received Watts's cordial approval. Watts made two other versions of this Psalm; the better one begins:

> Thro' every age, eternal God,
> Thou art our rest, our safe abode;
> High was thy throne ere heaven was made
> Or earth thy humble footstool laid.

Other famous hymns by Watts are "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"; "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"; "Joy to the World; the Lord is Come"; "Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove"; "Give Me the Wings of Faith to Rise"; "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" and "There Is a Land of Pure Delight."

Let us examine one other of Watts's hymns, noticing its style as typically hymnal, and noticing prosaically what the hymn means. The following is a free adaptation of the seventy-second Psalm, which is said to have been written for the occasion of Solomon's accession to the throne. The rendering of Watts is as follows:

> Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Doth his successive journeys run;
> His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
> Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
>
> [Behold the islands with their kings,
> And Europe her best tribute brings,
> From North to South the Princes meet
> To pay their homage at his feet.

There Persia glorious to behold.
There India shines in Eastern gold,
And barbarous nations at his word
Submit, and bow, and own their Lord.]

For him shall endless prayer be made
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns,
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.

[Where he displays his healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our king;
Angels descend with songs again
And earth repeat the loud Amen.]

In the preface of the book, Watts directs, "You may leave out those stanzas included in the crotchets []." It will be noticed that in both hymns quoted in full here the author has inclosed certain stanzas in

"crotchets" as though his hymn sense told him, but not quite emphatically enough, that those stanzas would not do. The hymn-books of to-day have left the stanzas out, except for the last one. What is there that prevents the second and third stanzas from being good hymnody? Is it that the hymn does not allow reference to contemporary geographical names? I think not; Greenland, Ceylon, India, and Africa are mentioned with fine effect in "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." Katherine Lee Bates' splendid hymn repeats "America" in every stanza. Why was it that Watts half-way crossed these stanzas out?

Behold their islands with their kings

is a good enough line of poetry and hymnody;

And Europe her best tribute brings

is not. "Europe" seems to be a word belonging both by sound and connotation to prose rather than to poetry. As it is used here it breaks the poetic spell. It is too immediate, too "every-day." The line brings a vague idea of continental trade and politics. It is somehow too plainly at hand. Certain names and common phrases have matter-of-fact prosaic connotation essentially. A hymn, for example, might say,

We bring our tithes to thee,

but not,

We bring thee ten per cent,

which means the same thing but is a mundane way of saying it. In the next stanza, the description of Persia is not quite convincing, and, again, it is not in the straight line of thought to describe Persia; that is not the point of the hymn. These lands are mentioned as different parts of the earth, to convey the idea of the "world-wide," "general"; this they fail to do, because the lands are too close together for the names to give that idea. The Wesley hymn-book revised and combined the two stanzas into one good stanza:

> From north to south the princes met
> To pay their homage at his feet
> While western empires own their Lord
> And savage tribes attend his word.

Another change was to replace "For" in stanza 4 with "To." This is not fanciful criticism, making much out of small matters. The hymn could not have survived without the changes; as it is, we see a communal taste, a social judgment, revising the original and making for itself a nearly perfect hymn. The idea developed in ringing lyrical terms is that the faith and the system of ethics taught by Christ will bring about a common civilization, a world-wide unity, and a prevalence of justice, good will, welfare, happiness; a universal realization of truth, fulfilment of obligation, and enjoyment of good. Is there any better service that a poet should perform toward the spirit of just understanding and good will —necessary if the world is to get along—than to

plant this idea alive with emotion in the minds of all ranks of people? If people get this idea into their songs they will get it also into their ballot-boxes and their general attitude and behavior. If the millions who sing this song imbibe even semi-consciously its faith in the truth and its spirit of charity, no one can calculate the worth of the old song-poet as a peacemaker and justice-worker in human society.

After Watts had made clear what manner of thing the hymn should be, there was a growing diffusion of hymnody, and a growing art in the creation of hymns. A view of the state of hymnody in the early part of the eighteenth century is given by Simon Browne, an independent minister of London, in the preface to his "Hymns and Spiritual Songs."[1] He argues for good music and free hymnody in church worship, saying there is no more reason for confining the church in singing hymns, to the biblical text than for confining the prayer and the rest of the liturgy to it. Praising the hymns of "good Mr. Mason," author of "Now from the Altar of My Heart," he goes on:

> And besides some collections from private hands, with an attempt to turn Mr. Herbert's poem into common meter, these I have mentioned were all the hymns I know to have been in common use either in private families or in Christian assemblies till wthin a few years past.

[1] London, 1720.

He praises the hymns of Stennett, and continues:

But the ingenious Mr. Watts has outdone all that went before him in the variety of his subjects, the smoothness of his verse, the richness of his fancy. The World, I hope, will not do me the injury to think that I aim at being his rival.

The hymns of Browne's volume are smooth verses of simple piety. They are strikingly cheerful, but they have not the poetic quality to make them last more than a hundred years; they have almost disappeared from the hymn-book of to-day. The following lines from his Hymn LXXX show his general style:

Lord, thou art good; all nature shews
Thee full, and free, and kind:
Thy bounty through creation flows,
Nor can it be confined.

The whole and every part proclaim
Unlimited good will:
It shines in stars, and flows in streams,
And broods on every hill.

It spreads through all the spreading main,
And heavens which spread more wide;
It drops in every shower of rain
And rolls on every tide.

This makes the heavenly people sing,
And fills their hearts with mirth;
Supplies and comforts everything,
That lives and moves on earth.

Joseph Stennett (1663–1715) published in 1679 "Hymns, Composed for the Celebration of the Holy Supper." This is important as the first notable Baptist hymn-book. Members of this branch of the church were early leaders in the development of the modern hymn. A prefatory hymn "written by another hand" in the edition of Stennett of the year 1713 contains this stanza:

> Tho long mistaken, I withheld
> Harmonious song, divine thy Due:
> Yet, better knowledge now instill'd,
> Thy tuneful praise my Voice shall shew.

Stennett issued another volume in 1712, composed for the celebration of the rite of baptism. It would seem that his idea was to use hymns only in connection with baptism and the eucharist.

The influence of Watts spread rapidly. The spirit of freedom and progress which was in the air found some expression in these new, free, and popular songs. Among increasing numbers of people the newly awakening social consciousness found a happy communal expression in the sturdy rimes and sturdy music of Watts's hymns. Numbers of new hymn-books sprang up to meet the growing demand. There was much singing now in England. These books one after another repeated in their prefaces the arguments of Watts as to the right of Christians to make new songs and sing them in their worship. It was the rule till toward the close of the eighteenth century to retain the name of Watts in titles of hymn-

books, as, for example, the Baptist hymnal edited by John Rippon, "A Selection of Hymns from the best Authors, intended to be an appendix to Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns." [1] To each new edition of this book were added more new hymns. A remark by Rippon in the preface indicates how far sentiment was swinging from old prejudice against singing in public worship, and from the old distrust of new hymns. Rippon thought that there should be in the book a hymn appropriate to sing after any sermon, to drive the idea home. "A too great variety is a thing scarcely to be conceived of." An undated edition of his hymnal at the beginning of the nineteenth century includes in his preface part of a letter written from Philadelphia saying that the book is used in America not only by Baptists but by Presbyterians and Methodists, and that the sale has reached over a hundred thousand copies. An edition of 1844 published after Rippon's death contained nearly twelve hundred hymns. Many other books bearing the name of Watts appeared in America; the one by President Dwight of Yale met with great favor, especially in New England.

Of the hymns in Wesley's first "Collection," published in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1737, the first real hymn-book of the Church of England, one third were written by Watts. The first book from the press of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia was, as has been said, an edition of the poems of Watts. This free-spirited writer of songs must have had a

[1] London, 1787.

good deal of influence upon the minds of Americans during the formative days of the republic.

In England and America the work of Watts, who was early recognized as the leader, above all others up to his time, in the art of English hymnody, still remains with us. An idea of his present standing may be gathered from a list giving the number of his hymns now included by representative hymn-books:

"Hymns Ancient and Modern	9
"The American Hymnal" (The Century Co.)	20
"The Baptist Hymnal"	145
"The English Hymnal"	10
"The Hymn and Tune Book" (Unitarian)	12
"The Hymnal" (Presbyterian, 1920)	49
"The Hymnal" (Protestant Episcopal, 1920)	12
"The Methodist Hymnal"	53
"The Oxford [University] Hymnal"	21
"The Union Hymnal for Jewish Worship"	3
Palgrave's "Treasury of Sacred Songs"	9
The Earl of Selbourne's "Book of Praise"	41
"The Westminster Abbey Hymn Book"	14
"Hymns of the Living Church"(New York, 1923)	14

Uncounted people sing his great hymns; and they have chosen them as expressive of basic essential truth, of ideas of right conduct, of poise of soul in a troubled world, and of just and generous emotion, of charity for all men and of living faith in God.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF THE WESLEYS

CHARLES WESLEY may be said to have taken up the tradition of English hymnody where Watts gave over his labor. Wesley was born in 1707, the year of the publication of Watts's first hymn-book, and lived till 1788. A large part of the eighty-one years of his life he devoted to the writing of hymns; he wrote more than six thousand. He was the poet, *par excellence,* of the great religious revival, which, hand and hand with the romantic movement in literature and the democratic movement in politics, swept through Europe and America and left a new world for men to live in. It became a common saying then, as in the time of Chrysostom, of Augustine, and of Luther, that more converts were made through hymns than through any other means.

Hymnody was a part of the new springtime of popular enlightenment and self-realization that was stirring through the world. In America Thomas Jefferson had said that he had rather have no government at all, with newspapers for the people to read, than to have any sort of government with no newspapers. Edmund Burke remarked significantly the prodigious sale of Blackstone's Commentary in

this country. Much the same service that Jefferson and Burke saw the newspapers and popular law-books rendering in the field of politics, Wesley's hymns rendered in the field of religion. And the office of the hymns was that of popular information as well as inspiration; they were as Wesley planned them to be, "a body of divinity."

These hymns came as if at a time appointed, the lyric call of a new dawn. Markedly individual, subjective, and, to use a word over-worn but particularly descriptive of their spirit, "democratic," they are a voice of the age. They ring out enthusiastically in the first person singular. To them the Divine Personality is not the distant king on his awful throne so much as a spirit dwelling in the believer's heart, the immediate present helper, guide, and friend. Their qualities of individuality, social warmth, and joyful belief appealed to the changing England.

A high place among the makers of the world's art must be given to those who have brought into common possession great vital ideas and emotions by way of song. Probably none will say that the art of Robert Burns has been less powerful than that of Joshua Reynolds or Christopher Wren, or that the gift to the world from the Acropolis or even from Parnassus has proved more genuine and vital art than the art of a book of songs from the hill called Zion. This book of hymns has lived not merely because men called it sacred but because it has embodied and inspired lofty ideas, just feelings, and pure motives; its influence has permeated general

human consciousness and colored human thought as no other single work of art has ever done. The maker of any people's song, if it is good song, deserves to be and will be numbered high among the people's great and beneficent souls.

The artists have found great opportunity and great satisfactions in the service of religion, witness the Taj Mahal, the temple of Neptune at Tarentum, the cathedrals of the thirteenth century, the paintings of the masters, and the religious drama of various ages. But the church generally and the Protestant side in particular has laid much stress on the idea that all other forms of art are insignificant compared with the inclusive artistry of well ordered and harmonious living. Architecture is patently one form of art constantly called into the service of the church; yet for two hundred years there have not been any very original contributions made to the glory of God and the edification of man in the form of architecture. But in the form of the popular lyric a good deal has been achieved. With the great temples and cathedrals in mind, or with some lovely small church in rural England before one's eyes, one might say that architecture has done more for religion than the other arts; but considering religious songs heard in the world clear back to the dawn of civilization, or hearing majestic hymns rolling out from great choirs and congregations or holy lays from simple folk at close of day, one might make the claim for song. A single song is very small and intangible compared to a mighty temple, but the

temple is stone, and anchored to one place. The song may be as intimate as breath and volant as the wind to go anywhere. The temple of Solomon has vanished, but the psalms of David are still with us. As masters of the church lyric, Watts and Wesley and Heber are very important figures in the history of English religious art and of English life.

Charles Wesley, if he had not done so, ought to have written great hymns. With his undoubted gift, he had before him the example of Watts and the newly discovered treasury of German hymnody. Besides this there was an insistent public demand for new hymns with which to express the newly aroused religious emotions of an age awakening, politically and socially, industrially, artistically, religiously. He lived in the stirring morning of the day that brought the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, the new freedom for English and French peasantry, the steam-engine, the poetry of Burns and Wordsworth, the political philosophy and practice of Edmund Burke, and the religious renaissance led by John Wesley.

A strong influence upon Wesley besides the work of Watts and the other earlier hymn-writers was that of German hymnody. On their trip to America the Wesleys had met a party of Moravian emigrants and had heard their hymns on board the ship. Later in London the Wesleys again were much influenced by another group of devout Moravians. It was through these associations that the hymns which had sounded so powerfully through the German people's

history since the Reformation, and which had been known and loved long before the Reformation, now reached England. Nor was the deep personal stirring of spirit, necessary for the production of hymns, lacking with Charles Wesley. The sensitive scholar of Christ Church, Oxford, soon came to know what it was to be hailed and blessed by one eager throng and cursed and stoned by another. A High Church Anglican, by nature and training conservative and aristocratic, he was yet charged with the broad democratic spirit of the time, and by his deep poetic impulse, to be the singer of new freedom and new life for individual and common mankind.

Another good reason for his writing hymns was that he was a member of the Wesley family. His mother, Susannah Annesley Wesley, was a product of the best Puritan culture and tradition. Remarkable for her learning, her common sense, her piety, and the great force and beauty of her character, she was one of the noblest and best of England's famous women. His grandfather, John Wesley, was a poet and divine of note in his day. His father, Samuel Wesley, a great-nephew of the author of "Religio Medici," was also a clergyman and the author of six volumes of poetry besides a number of prose works. The father and three sons, Samuel, John, and Charles, are represented in the English hymn-book to-day. Mehitabel, whose sad story has been retold by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch,[1] was remarkable for her classical learning and for unusual

[1] "Hetty Wesley," London, 1907.

poetical gift. Charles Wesley's sons, Samuel and Charles, both became eminent men; the latter at the age of eight had written an oratorio, "Ruth," described by his biographer in the "Dictionary of National Biography" as "not a child's performance, but a musicianly work." Samuel became a leading musician of England. Samuel Sebastian Wesley, a grandson, was a musician of high rank, known over the world as one of the foremost English composers of church music. Thus seven of Charles Wesley's family from four generations have contributed directly to the making of the English hymn-book.

Yet another influence was that exerted by his publisher, who was none other than that tremendous character, John Wesley. Surely no verse-writer ever had a more enthusiastic and energetic Mæcenas than he.

With all his inherited genius and with all the inspiration that came to him from without, Charles Wesley had the gift of a rich and generous nature. More vital still was his mystic's experience of the deep realities of religion.

Wesley, like Watts, wrote very freely and spontaneously, as the thousands of lyrics he wrote bear witness. Not all of them are good; much of the verse reminds one of a painter's tentative sketches and drawings. But had he not freely written so many he might not have written the smaller number so consummately well. This spontaneous hymnody

of the time belongs to the spirit of freedom and wing testing that was abroad; Watts, tired of the labored formality in poetry, had said in the preface to his volume of 1837, "Many a line needs the file to polish the roughness of it, and many a thought wants richer language to adorn and make it shine . . . but I have at present neither inclination nor leisure to correct and I hope I never shall." And the tradition of English hymnody set by Watts was carried on by Wesley. Watts praised Wesley generously, saying that Wesley's "Come Thou Traveller Unknown" was worth all the verse that he himself had ever written; this was of course too lavish praise.

The two poets are alike, in general spirit and purpose, yet very different in style. Wesley came from the old heart-of-England stock, from generations of strong and cultivated people: his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all Oxford men; his mother's father, Doctor Annesley, was a Puritan scholar and divine of national reputation; Charles Wesley was an Oxford master of arts, a Tory, and a strict Anglican. Watts, on the other hand, was by descent half French, of ardent Non-Conformist tradition and education, a doctor of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, a stanch Independent.

But their differences are such as to make their work complementary. They stand unrivaled in the field of English hymnody except as each may rival the other. The style of Watts is austere, objective,

and formal; the style of Wesley is warm, subjective, intimate. Watts, born in 1674, the year that Milton died, was nearer to the time of Addison and Dryden; Wesley was nearer to the romantic period. A stanza from a hymn by each on the same theme will indicate the difference:

Watts. Come, sound his praise abroad
And hymns of glory sing;
Jehovah is the sovereign God,
The universal king.

Wesley. O for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

Even in these four-line stanzas one can see not only clear distinctions between the two writers, but clear signs of the differing times and schools of thought. The first has the air of the Age of Reason; the logical traits are predominant; Deity is envisioned from the Calvinistic point of view—"Jehovah," "Sovereign Lord," "Universal King." The second stanza has the air of the later period—spontaneous, enthusiastic, personal. Compare again Watts's grand hymn "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne" with Wesley's "Love Divine, All Love Excelling."

The best known hymn by Charles Wesley is "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," published in "Psalms and Spiritual Hymns," in 1740, soon after his return from America:

Jesu, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee:
Leave, O leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me:
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing.

Wilt thou not regard my call?
Wilt thou not accept my prayer?
Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall—
Lo, on thee I cast my care:
Reach me out thy gracious hand!
While I of thy strength receive,
Hoping against hope I stand,
Dying, and behold, I live!

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness:
False and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace in thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin:
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me give of thee:
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

This is one of the supreme hymns of the world. It has gone to the corners of the earth with the English language and had been translated into virtually every language there is. The song has become a treasury of spiritual wealth. A thousand legends cluster about it as about some ancient shrine or about the memory of some gentle and famous saint. Countless children through successive generations have learned and kept its lines by heart; countless men and women have found in it deep refreshment of spirit as from a cool spring and shade by the road when tired and thirsty; and uncounted ones have passed out of this life with its words on their lips.

As English poetry, it is characterized by the brevity, melody, intensity, and completeness of the pure lyric. George Saintsbury says, "The mere word-music of it is fingered throughout in the most absolutely adequate manner."[1] If one reads it without thought of the tune he is still compelled by its inherent melody. And its effects are attained by the simplest and most direct means; of

[1] "A History of English Prosody," Vol. II, p. 531. London, 1908.

the 236 words of the poem all but thirty-seven are monosyllables. The images are vivid and quickly drawn, the movement is swift and harmonious, the lines glow with life and warmth. In it the hymn-book has found a perfect and immortal song.

It stands to-day as Wesley wrote it except that a single word, the subjunctive "be" in the sixth line, is changed to "is"; and the original third stanza is omitted. The change of verb-form is merely to accord with the trend of the language to drop subjunctives. The stanza omitted is as good lyric poetry as the rest, but it is a shade too fervent for the steady hymn-book. The title Wesley gave the hymn was "In Time of Prayer and Temptation," later "In Temptation." Like most hymns, however, it is known by its first line. The Latin vocative in the opening line, "Jesu, Lover," is usually printed in the English form. Of all hymns in the hymn-book this one has been revised and amended probably more than any other; this in spite of John Wesley's exhortation in the preface of his hymn-book to all publishers who use these hymns not to alter them. "Hymn-cobblers," he says, "should not try to mend them. I really do not think they are able." Yet in some cases amendment did better even Charles Wesley's hymns. For example, Wesley wrote:

> Hark how all the welkin rings,
> Glory to the King of kings.

This line was altered to:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!

The changes were made by Martin Madan in 1760, and later accepted by Wesley. But the hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," though it has more than thirty variations of the first stanza, has not been improved. In the first line "refuge" has been supplied for "lover." The same word "refuge," has been supplied for "bosom" in the second line. The first personal pronoun has been changed to the plural, "lover of our souls; Hide us, O our Saviour, hide." Not one of these changes fails to injure the hymn. There has been some difficulty among hymn editors with the third line,

While the nearer waters roll.

It has been changed in various books to read

While the billows near me roll,
While the threat'ning billows roll,
While the waters round us roll.

Even "Hymns Ancient and Modern," usually conservative in altering hymns, has made the quite dull emendation,

While the gathering waters roll.

There is no point here in trying to visualize waters gathering somewhere and rolling. Wesley knew the sea and knew what he was saying. There is in the figure some reminiscence, doubtless, of the desperate storm he came through on his American voy-

age. But even the great hymnologist, Dr. Julian, raises objection to "nearer" as an adjective descriptive of waves breaking on a reef or on the shore, the ship of course being at sea. This meaning can be got from the line, though it seems that if Wesley had meant "breakers" he would have used that word. But the poet's figure is accurate and graphic —while the nearer waters roll—"nearer" being an adverb modifying "roll"; that is, while waters—either as a rising flood, or as waves in a storm—roll nearer the deck of the ship. Since "tempest" is mentioned in the next line, Wesley evidently had the latter figure in mind.

The changing of a word or the shading of a plural by the poet sometimes makes all the difference between mediocrity and supremacy, between life and death for his poem. Of course no amount of mere word-manipulation can give the breath of life; many attempts at hymnody published in the books are sad and flat because they are merely pious clichés artificially joined together—mechanical construction, not warm and breathing poetry. In the preface of his hymn-book of 1780 John Wesley says:

> I desire men of taste to judge whether there is not in some of the following verses the true Spirit of Poetry; such as cannot be acquired by art and labour; but must be the gift of nature. By labour a man may become a tolerable imitator of *Spenser* or *Shakespear* or *Milton* and may heap together pretty compound epithets, as "pale eyed," "weak-eyed" and the like. But unless he is born a poet he will never attain to genuine Spirit of Poetry.

Watts, the Wesleys, and Cowper had this spirit without which they could not have written the vigorously living hymns that enrich English literature.

Stanzas from Charles Wesley's hymn, "Before Work," are indicative of what may be considered about the level of his work. There is a suggestion in these lines of the gentle and saintly George Herbert and, looking forward, a suggestion of the poetic theory and manner of William Wordsworth:

> Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go
> My daily labor to pursue;
> Thee, only thee, resolved to know
> In all I think, or speak, or do.
>
> The task thy wisdom hath assigned,
> O let me cheerfully fulfil;
> In all thy works thy presence find,
> And prove thy good and perfect will. . . .
>
> For thee delightfully employ
> Whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given,
> And run my course with even joy
> And closely walk with thee to heaven.

The lines achieve a difficult thing; they speak of the most profound matters with colloquial simpleness and ease, yet with perfect dignity. The poem has a tonic sweetness that comes of strength. It has the humility of faith in God, but no cringing; the trustfulness of the child and the serene assurance of the upright man whose faith is in what he knows to be true and faithful: it is the whole-hearted

service of religion where service is perfect freedom. It is full of a sort of Christian independence. How much more the man and gentleman do these lines show the author to be, and how much more worthiness of trust and worship do they attribute to God than do many of the medieval hymns such as "Day of Wrath" as well as many of those current today.

For although the hymns are the very flower of all theological writing for breadth of conception and for poise of manner, still there are hymns that have crept into favor for a while that are ferocious —really of the disposition and manner of wild beasts —or else maudlin or plainly silly. For instance a popular hymn begins with the climax of unmanliness and absurdity:

> O to be nothing, nothing
> Only to lie at his feet,
> A broken and emptied vessel
> For the Master's use made meet.

Give this stanza what it hardly deserves—a moment's analysis—and picture the pain and surprise of an earthly master whose beloved servant suddenly becomes nothing, nothing, and yet manages to serve the table with empty vessels that are also broken, ending it all with the plain remark the master has got what he deserved. Coventry Patmore perhaps thought of this kind of praise in his poem, "The Child's Purchase," where he conceives the Virgin Mary seeking to shield the Almighty from uncouth

worship by hotly berating those who neglect her own mediary offices, calling them

> The unwashed boors who hail God to His face.

Beyond the unconscious humor and slight irreverence of Patmore's conception one must appreciate the self-sacrificing disposition shown by the intermediary in the act of listening to and intercepting such poetry of praise as the above. But let it be said in soberness, the more one truly venerates the Mother the more he might know her as giving glad assent to the words of the Son, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." Wesley's poem and true hymn shows the longing of the good man to walk with God, striving always to elevate his soul to that high plane. There is no mawkishness nor groveling in the great, manly hymns of Wesley.

Another hymn of Wesley more stately than the one above, yet none the less fervent, embodies likewise his great tenet, the immediate access of the human soul to the Infinite. The power of the idea is heightened by its simplicity and severity of expression:

> Love divine, all love excelling,
> Joy of Heaven to earth come down,
> Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
> All thy faithful mercies crown. . . .
>
> Breathe, O breathe thy loving spirit
> Into every troubled breast,
> Let us all in thee inherit,
> Let us find the promised rest.

There is for him no bar to the true seeker after God. The following lines, though not good hymnody, emphasize the same article of faith, relying more upon the "inner witness" than upon any outward agency. The idea is characteristic of the author no less than of his age just freeing itself from many bonds of mind and spirit, from the "rule of the Syllogism, the Scaffold, and the Epigram."

> . . . No such frigid laws we fear
> Who to the king of kings draw near,
> Boldly approach his gracious throne,
> And freely our requests make known.
>
> Beyond the inner courts we press,
> Enter into the holy place,
> Sure to obtain the peace of God,
> And all we ask through Jesus' blood.

Full of animation and color of style and rapt abandon of worship are the lines beginning:

> Lo, he comes with clouds descending.

The Christmas hymn, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," joined with the Mendelssohn tune, is a glorious song. "Soldiers of Christ Arise" is vibrant with melodious energy and zeal for God. The morning hymn, "Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies," and the great hymn for Easter, "Christ the Lord Is Risen To-day," are the other hymns that are not likely to die as long as the language lives.

With all the vigor of his conviction and the force

and splendor of his expression, Wesley is characterized by great gentleness, tolerance, and humility. His lyrics flame high with love of God, and glow with human charity. Through his less known songs there is a constant tone of tolerance and of nobility.

> In mercy then to me impart,
> The largeness of a loving heart,
> A heart to no one sect confined.

Love is his favorite theme; the words "light," "joy," "sweetness," "grace," recur very often, and are themselves descriptive of the spirit that animates the man. Below is a list of representative hymn-books, giving the number of hymns by Charles Wesley:

"Hymns Ancient and Modern"	25
"The American Hymnal" (The Century Co.)	17
"The Baptist Hymnal"	44
"The Common Service Book" (Lutheran)	21
"The English Hymnal"	20
"The Hymn and Tune Book" (Unitarian)	11
"The Hymnal" (Presbyterian)	24
"The Hymnal" (Protestant Episcopal)	18
"The Methodist Hymnal"	121
"The Oxford [University] Hymn Book"	29
Palgrave's "Treasury of Sacred Song"	12
The Earl of Selbourne's "Book of Praise"	27
"The Westminster Abbey Hymn Book"	25
"Hymns of the Living Church" (New York, 1923)	12

John Wesley, it seems, was too busy a man to write many hymns, though it was he who made the translations contained in the Wesley books from the German, Latin, and Spanish. He was an exceptional linguist, and was himself the author of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French grammars. He also compiled and published an English dictionary.

He was a prodigiously energetic and powerful man. Before the age of steam, he traveled two hundred and fifty thousand miles, mostly on horseback, though he was a vigorous walker. He was a great reader. In his "Journal" there are many casual references to his reading, done on horseback, on shipboard, and wherever he could find time. The reading done on his journeys included Homer, Virgil, Anacreon, Lucian, Voltaire, Machiavelli, Milton, Pope, Laurence Sterne, Ossian. Among his favorite books was Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Godly Life." He was author of more than a hundred works, and editor of a magazine; he was a proponent of animal evolution—of course before Charles Darwin was born. "Leisure and I," he had once written from college, "have parted company."

Dr. Johnson complained that Wesley would never stay to talk when he came to see him, though Wesley's "Journal for February 18, 1774, says, "I spent two hours with that great man, Dr. Johnson." Sitting for a picture by Romney, Wesley praised the painter mainly for his despatch. "Mr. Romney is a painter indeed. He struck off an exact likeness at once, and did more in an hour than Sir Joshua

did in ten."[1] George III listened to Wesley with respect, and followed his advice in important matters relating to the Church of England. Wesley was one of those present in the robing-chamber at the coronation.

But Wesley's heart was in the places where he spent the most of his life, preaching the Gospel to the poor and unchurched and ignorant, and such as had no helper. He was too busy to devote much time to writing poetry, though Samuel Bradburn, a friend of Wesley, said of him, "He had a fine taste for poetry and composed himself many of our hymns; but he told me that he and his brother agreed not to distinguish their hymns from each other."[2]

It is certain that Charles Wesley wrote most of the hymns, and that John Wesley made the various translations. There is no way of proving that the elder brother is not the author of some of the hymns ascribed to Charles. Dr. Nutter and Dr. Tillett think that John Wesley wrote the following hymn, because it has only the second and fourth stanzas riming. No known stanza of Charles Wesley is thus constructed; some of the elder brother's translations have this arrangement of rime. The hymn seems to have also a logical tone more characteristic of John Wesley:

[1] From a letter of Wesley. Quoted by D. Baines-Griffeth in "Wesley the Anglican." London, 1919.

[2] Quoted by David Craemer, in "Methodist Hymnody," New York, 1848.

We lift our hearts to thee,
O Day-Star from on high!
The sun itself is but thy shade,
Yet cheers both earth and sky.

O let thy orient beams
The night of sin disperse,
The mists of error and of vice
Which shade the universe!

How beauteous nature now!
How dark and sad before!
With joy we view the pleasing change,
And nature's God adore.

May we this life improve,
To mourn for errors past;
And live this short revolving day
As if it were our last.

To God, the Father, Son,
And Spirit,—One in Three—
Be glory; as it was, is now,
And shall forever be.

A stanza from one of his translations, Gerhard Tersteegen's "Verborgne Gottes Liebe Du!" indicates the quality of his work:

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed no man knows,
I see from far thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for thy repose:
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest till it finds rest in thee.

"Give to the Winds Thy Fears" and "Jesu Thy Boundless Love to Me" are translations by John Wesley from the powerful hymns of Paul Gerhardt.

John Wesley possessed what has been called the "hymn sense" to an admirable degree. In the precarious business of amending and revising hymns, he changed many of those he published, usually to their sure improvement. The hymns both of Watts and his brother Charles he altered with a bold hand and with a delicate judgment. One of the fine hymns of the hymn-book to-day is that of Watts beginning,

> Before Jehovah's awful throne.

But as Watts wrote it,

> Nations attend before thy throne,

the hymn lacked the eye-charming first line that has saved the life of many a good poem.

Wesley's exuberant conviction of the human spirit's right and power, under God, to transcend material circumstances is well expressed in the sturdy lyric beginning,

> Stands the omnipotent decree.

That is a notable triumph of imagination and of poetic expression in the last line:

> Let this earth dissolve and blend
> In dust the wicked and the just;
> Let those ponderous orbs descend
> And grind us into dust:—

Rests secure the righteous man
At his Redeemer's beck,
Sure to merge and rise again,
And mount above the wreck.

Lo the heavenly spirit towers
Like flame o'er nature's funeral pyre
Triumphs in immortal powers
And claps his wings of fire.

John Wesley's "Journal" and letters comprise some rich human history as well as throwing light on the upspringing Wesleyan hymnody. The immaculate, wiry little man whose quick firm step and ruddy cheeks and flashing eyes belied his ninety years could write, "I never lost a night's sleep in my life, nor spent as much as a quarter of an hour at any one time in low spirits." Yet night after night for weeks he had slept on the floor with a great-coat or Barket's "Notes on the New Testament" for a pillow, and long had found it a "good tonic" to preach at five in the morning. Arriving somewhere at the end of the day, "extremely weary," he found the people "so glad to see me that they never once thought of asking me to eat or drink"; yet he adds, "My weariness vanished when I began to speak."

Stones might be hurled at his head; subtler and more wounding missiles might be hurled from those of his own class, even from his old familiar friends, yet he is calm and reasonably careless. "I never fret. . . . I see God sitting upon his throne and rul-

ing all things well." Such vigor of life, such rich and ample culture, such comeliness of spirit, such bold and joyful faith finding most varied expression in his parish which was the world, found expression, too, in verse which will live. Lines from his translation of Paul Gerhardt's "Befiehl Du Deine Wege" show the quality of his soul and the source of his faith:

Commit thou all thy ways
And griefs into his hands . . .

Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey;
He shall direct thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way.

Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves of cloud and storm
He gently clears the way . . .

What though thou rulest not?
Yet heaven and earth and hell
Proclaim God sitting on his throne
And ruling all things well.

Besides the hymnals of the Wesleys, which did not at first gain acceptance among the other religious bodies, there were published in rapid succession,

especially through the latter half of the century, large numbers of collections and original volumes. Foremost among these was always the "Psalms and Hymns" of Isaac Watts. Other notable books of hymns were those of Philip Doddridge, John Cennick, Anne Steele, Martin Madan, John Newton, and William Cowper, the Countess of Huntingdon, Augustus Toplady, John Rippon, and William Williams from Wales, Thomas Kelley from Ireland, and James Stewart from Scotand.

Philip Doddridge (1704–59) wrote many good hymns, among which are "O Happy Day That Fixed My Choice"; "Awake My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve"; "Do I Not Love Thee, O My Lord?" "Eternal Source of Every Joy"; Triumphant Zion, Lift Thy Head"; "How Gentle God's Commands."

Doddridge was a man of learning, of fluctuating poetical gift, and of saintly character. Some ideas of his style may be gained from the following hymn, based upon the sublime passage in the fourth chapter of Luke, which in turn is taken from Isaiah 61:1–3:

Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoner to release,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes from thickest films of vice
To clear the mental ray;
And on the eyes oppressed by night
To pour celestial day.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The wounded soul to cure,
And with the treasures of his grace,
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hozannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
Till heaven's eternal arches ring,
With thy beloved name.

But this is not quite the hymn that Doddridge wrote; John Wesley and others revised it. The original second stanza beginning,

In him the Spirit, largely poured,
Exerts his sacred fire,

was dropped, to the obvious improvement of the poem. What is now the third stanza originally closed with the lines,

And on the eyeballs of the blind
To pour celestial day.

The figure was, until Wesley revised it, too violent; it suggested glare and pain rather than restoration of sight or the break of dawn. The line,

The bleeding soul to cure,

disturbed the balance of the lyric. The stronger of two ideas, that of "cure" here, should not be expressed by the weaker and less vivid word. If the poet used "bleeding" he should find a word like "stanch" to balance it. The original last stanza,

> The silver trumpets publish loud
> The jubilee of the Lord;
> Our debts are all remitted now,
> Our heritage restored,

did not keep the main idea of the hymn, and fell away in poetic quality.

In any hymn where there is a seriously faulty stanza, one of three consequences is possible: the stanza may be revised, it may be dropped out, or it may remain to drag the whole hymn into the place of forgotten songs.

As to the right of the hymn-book to revise or in any way to change an author's work there is a difference of opinion. Surely no editor has a right to twist a poem out of its original meaning or to add foreign ideas to it, holding the author responsible.

But the hymnal is a book of religious worship and not primarily an anthology of various poets' work; the individuality of the author tends to merge itself in the common expression. And it seems most natural and right to save a good hymn by judicious omission or alteration meant only to make the poem conform to the type. Many of the best hymns have thus been made eligible. When alteration has been

made it should be acknowledged with the notice of authorship. In the standard books to-day notice is carefully given if any substantial alteration has been made. The permanent changes are made naturally; if assembled folk accept an expression as their own it must be their expression. The folk-mind has thus often changed a saying or proverb to make it more quotable and more comprehensible, as for example changing "apples of gold and pictures of silver" to "apples of gold and peaches of silver"; or with more art and reason the lines of Bulwer-Lytton,

> In the lexicon of youth which fate reserves
> For a bright manhood there is no such word as fail

to

> In the bright lexicon of youth there 's no such work as fail.

Of the thousand hymnals containing Doddridge's hymn to-day there is not one that has not helped to save it by adopting the revision pointed out.

Now let us take this hymn as an average fair specimen of English hymnody. Let us examine it in detail, somewhat technically at first.

As a lyrical poem it obeys the twofold essential law of unity in that it is single and complete; it has but one theme, and it develops that theme in a composition of definite beginning, middle, and end. It has further the essential glow of emotion: it is warm, earnest, intense to the extent of being a harmoniously controlled outcry. Its theme is a con-

templation of the beneficent advent of Christ. Its complete movement of thought is apparent: (1) He comes; (2) He comes to free and bless mankind; (3) mankind will acknowledge and acclaim Him. The words, phrases, and figures of speech of the composition are in harmony with one another and with the central idea and emotion. It shows an admirable lyric brevity of statement:

> Let every heart prepare a throne
> And every voice a song.

Its phrasing is elevated and felicitous.

> The gates of brass before him burst,
> The iron fetters yield.
>
> Till heaven's eternal arches ring.

The thought moves unswervingly and swiftly, as it should move, toward its climax.

As a religious song it has a breadth about it that is characteristic of the greater hymns. It states its truth broadly as for many minds; it speaks from no corner point of view, and insists on no particular angle of opinion. Its assertion is the Advent of Christ. The Adventist can sing the words as expressive of his own peculiar belief that one day suddenly the clouds will take their places in set order, a trumpet will sound, and Christ will appear with an army of angels out of the heavens and set up a perfect régime of justice, love, and happiness in the world. The strict ritualist may regard it as a calendar hymn for the feast in celebration of the

birth of Christ. The strict Evangelical may sing it with particular application to his own "heart experience." The Liberal may sing it as a fervent expression of his belief that the human race is moving forward by evolutionary processes toward a fuller and richer realization of knowledge, power, good will, and happiness. He may understand by "gates of brass" and "iron fetters" all evil restrictions of the freedom of the mind, whether it be of external tyranny or of internal weakness and ignorance. Binding the broken heart, curing the wounded soul, and the like may mean to some minds deliverance from individual distress or evil; to others, better education, better social justice, even better medical science, and general welfare through universal practice of the principles of Christianity.

Still, however many things the hymn may be to many people, there is nothing wishy-washy or doubtful about it. It is an assertion of faith that through Jesus Christ—however one may understand it—the will of God, which is the greatest good and happiness for all men, is to prevail on the earth. We may say that this is a good lyrical poem; and the great body of people who sing hymns say that it is a good hymn.

Doddridge wrote the hymn in 1735. If he had written it thirty years later when there was a clearer idea of what the hymn-type demands, the revisions would probably not have been left to other hands. A more nearly perfect hymn of his is the following:

How gentle God's commands,
How kind his precepts are!
Come cast your burden on the Lord,
And trust his constant care.

Beneath his watchful eye,
His saints securely dwell;
The hand that bears all nature up
Shall guard his children well.

Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your Heavenly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

His goodness stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day;
I 'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away.

The second stanza began originally,

While Providence supports
Let saints securely dwell.

One does not have to search long for the reason why the hymn sense accepted the change. If the idea of the stanza is the guardianship of Providence, "watchful eye" is more appropriate, as it is more specific and concrete.

This hymn is simple in expression; swift, animated, sincere. There are few songs with a finer climax than that in the last stanza. One feels that the poem is an artistic expression of honest, true re-

ligion. It has a mildness of spirit that contrasts with the controversial time in which it was published, 1755. That may be why many of the collections of the eighteenth century omitted it.

One of Whitfield's Methodist converts, John Fawcett, became minister of a small Baptist church at Waingate, in Yorkshire. When he had become a distinguished preacher there came repeated calls for him to go up to London. But like Chaucer's and Goldsmith's poor parsons he chose to stay with his country charge. At last, however, when under urgent pressure he had decided that it was his duty to go, and his goods were on the wagon and he was ready to start, he saw that many of his humble flock were weeping. He ordered the wagons to turn back, the story goes; and he went into his house and wrote what was to become one of the famous hymns of the language, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." He stayed in Yorkshire till his death in 1817 at the age of seventy-eight. Though he was a considerable writer in his day, and though he wrote as many as 169 hymns, none of them matches this one:

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our father's throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
A sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way;
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.

From sorrow, toil and pain,
And sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.

It is easy to believe that this gentle and neighborly hymn, sung year in and year out over the English-speaking world, has had influence in making for charity, harmony, and happiness of life at more than one time and in more than one community. One can imagine many a person, under a weight of grief and other kinds of trouble, taking heart at the latter verses of the hymn. And it is practically useful for man to have his hope renewed. "Sweet hope is his companion," says Plato in the first book of the "Republic," "cheering his heart, the nurse of his age—hope which more than aught else steers the

capricious will of mortal man." There is a good deal of faith, hope, and charity to be found in these simple verses.

Let me cite this hymn further as evidence that there is such a thing as the practical ministry of poetry in ordinary life. I speak in the first person because that is the best way to give the evidence. In the negro section of the old graveyard at Chapel Hill one afternoon I saw a group of village negroes holding the funeral of an old man who had been among them a sage and a shoemaker and good neighbor. These humble folk closed their service of burial standing around the grave and singing the verses of Dr. John Fawcett, written in Yorkshire in 1772. I can remember yet the peculiar richness of their voices in the phrase "this glorious hope revives," and the plaintive peacefulness and the light in their faces as they sang "and hope to meet again." I am entirely sure that the combination of the words and music was worth a great deal to those negroes in the practical service of making them happier and better men and women.

Edward Perronet (1726–92), a descendant of French Protestant refugees, son of an Anglican priest, supporter of John Wesley—later a friendly opponent, a chaplain to the Countess of Huntington, issued a volume, "Occasional Verses, Moral and Sacred, Published for the Instruction and Amusement of the Candidly Serious and Religious,"[1] which contains one of the most popular hymns:

[1] London, 1785.

All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

Every stanza of the hymn, except the fourth,

Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at his feet,
And crown him Lord of all,

has been altered. The last stanza was written by another hand, probably that of Rippon. Some of the alterations are inconsequential; most of them make toward betterment of the poem as a hymn. For example, the stanza,

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all,

originally read,

Let ev'ry tribe and ev'ry tongue,
Throughout this earthly ball,
Unite in one harmonious song,
And crown him Lord of all.

Artistic omission was exercised in the case of these two stanzas:

Let high-born seraphs tune the lyre,
And as they tune it, fall

Before his face who tunes their choir,
And crown him Lord of all.

Hail him, ye heirs of David's line,
Whom David Lord did call;
The God incarnate, man Divine,
And crown him Lord of all.

John Wesley had a stout theological opponent in Augustus Toplady. Since the time when St. Peter and St. Paul disagreed so hotly, Christian leaders have found it necessary not only to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil, but sometimes to fight one another. A stubborn controversy between these brother priests of the Church of England over the doctrine of election, in which they disputed with remarkable heat, seems partly to have fired the emotion that blazed out in one of the greatest hymns of the world, "Rock of Ages." Toplady had published a hymn beginning with these words:

My name from the palm of his hand
Eternity cannot erase.
Impressed on his heart it remains
In marks of indelible grace:
Yes! I to the end shall endure
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure
The glorified spirits of heaven.

Wesley called him "a vain boaster," and the two exchanged a good deal of argument peppered with invective. In his "Gospel Magazine," March, 1776,

Toplady published an essay against the Arminians. Comparing the "debt of sin" to the national debt, he showed how that "at ten years old, each of us is chargeable with 315 millions, and 36 thousand sins—, at *twenty* with 630 millions, and 720 thousand . . . At *eighty* with 2522 millions and 880 thousand." "When," continues the writer, "shall *We* be able to pay off this debt? Never." Then follows a heated passage, at the end of which is a poem entitled "A *Living* and *Dying* Prayer for the HOLIEST Believer in the world":

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to the cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes are closed in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

It is a grand hymn; there are few poems more generally familiar and more treasured in the affections of the people than this. For example, ten thousand people and more according to press accounts gathered lately on the wild hillside where tradition says the poem was written, to celebrate the memory of the author. The fact that the Prince Consort Albert repeated the hymn as he died helped of course to spread its fame over the British Empire; but that is only a detail of its history, a symbol of its hold upon the world.

It is notable, and yet, as one considers it, not strange, that among the very few hymns that take rank with this one, three others, namely, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Lead Kindly Light," and "Nearer My God to Thee," have precisely the same theme, and are built on the same pattern and in the same poetic mood. Each opens with the cry of the soul for divine help; each reiterates the idea of human insufficiency; and each closes with a gleam of exaltation. Wesley's hymn closes:

> Spring thou up within my heart,
> Rise to all eternity.

That of Mrs. Adams:

> Or if on joyful wing,
> Cleaving the sky,
> Sun, moon and stars forgot,
> Upwards I fly,
> Still all my songs shall be

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

And that of Newman:

And with the morn, those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

It is illuminating in the study of poetry to read "Rock of Ages" in its original setting and to see how the cold and storm of Toplady's hard disputation changes to lyric fair weather with the first line of the hymn; the title with its ironic thrust at theological antagonists, even though its fervor almost raises it to the plane of poetry, is bitter, and does not accord with the lyric sweetness of the hymn. It belongs clearly to the prose discourse, and has therefore been dropped.

It may be noted here that most of the titles given hymns by their authors have been dropped as not belonging to the lyric; the hymns are almost invariably known by the first line, or part of the first line. Wesley's "Depths of Mercy" was entitled "After a Relapse into Sin"; "Jesu the Name High over All" was headed "After Preaching in a Church"; "Come O Thou Traveller Unknown" was "Wrestling Jacob"; "Lo on a Narrow Neck of Land" was "An Hymn for Seriousness." Addison's title for "The Spacious Firmament on High" was "The Right Means to Strengthen Faith." None of the three titles remain which Newman gave in succession to "Lead Kindly Light." Toplady's "If on a Quiet

Sea," the only other hymn by which he is remembered, he called "Weak Believers Encouraged"; he later modified the title of his great hymn to "A Living and Dying Prayer."

"Rock of Ages" has been subject to a great many alterations. The text was rearranged with several changes of phrase by Thomas Cotterill, for his "Selection of Psalms and Hymns," 1815. One obviously necessary change was that of the second line:

When my eye-strings break in death.

The best emendation is:

When mine eyes shall close in death.

Others are:

When my eyelids close in death,
When my heart-strings break in death,
When my eyelids sink in death.

The "Catholic Hymn Book"[1] alters the first line to

Rock of Ages, rent for me.

The hymn did not become widely known for fifty years after its publication. Now there are few hymnals or collections of representative songs that do not give it a place.

[1] New York, 1876.

As a lyrical poem "Rock of Ages" will hold its own compared with great lyrics of other types. Its energy and color, its forceful and vivid figures, its rhythm, its unity of thought and structure, sincerity, harmony—all this reveals good art, that is, powerful impulse under strict, wise discipline. Notice its balance of austerity and fervor, of dignity and tenderness. The images implying the immanence, the permanence, and the majesty of God over the stretches of time and place mingle in the same tense lines with the most intimate personal appeal:

> When I soar through worlds unknown—
> See thee on thy judgment throne—
> Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
> Let me hide myself in thee.

With all this, it is, to revert to the title, a living prayer for the humblest sinner as well as for the holiest believer.

William Cowper, though he is the greatest of English poets who have, to any large degree, devoted their talent to writing hymns, is not the greatest hymn-poet. The tone of the "Olney Hymns," which he and John Newton began in 1771 and published in 1779, is that of combined gloom, delicacy, and rapt devotion. Cowper's "O for a Closer Walk with God"; "Sometimes a Light Surprises"; "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood"; "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" are among his best hymns. "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"; "How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours"; "Amazing Grace!

How Sweet the Sound"; "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds"; "Safely through Another Week" are among Newton's best. In writing these best hymns Newton allowed his poetic gift to overrule his poetic theory, which as stated in the preface was that "the imagery and coloring of poetry if admitted at all, should be admitted very sparingly." His theory was nearer to the plodding rimes of Sternhold and Hopkins, his practice happily nearer to the Psalms so full of color and imagery.

The peculiar distrust of poetry by men like Newton was partly due to their grim, stern traits of character. But it was also partly due to perverse traits of poetry in their day. Poetry had fallen in with bad company; or rather bad company had fallen in with poetry. Edward Young, the author of "Night Thoughts," in his last poem, "Resignation," expresses the wish that poetry might find a new and better theme:

> And in the age of gaudy guilt
> Gay folly's flood restrain.

He expresses a Wordsworthian idea that one office of poetry is to inspire ideas which shall

> Amidst the storms of life support
> A calm, unshaken mind.

Cowper in his "Table Talk" says that the poesy of his day, instead of calling men to share "divine delight,"

Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase at the fool-frequented fair,
Of vanity a wreath herself to wear
Is profanation of the basest kind. . . .
If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen;
If acrimony, slander, and abuse
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce,

if this, says Cowper, is the office of poetry we might better cry:

Hail Sternhold, then, and Hopkins hail!

A man of the taste, culture, and rich imaginative nature of Cowper must have thought the state of England's poetry then to be very low if he contemplated renouncing it to return to Sternhold and Hopkins for poetic example and theory.

Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skillful guide into poetic ground;
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every muse attend her on her way;
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend
And many a compliment politely penned;
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undrest,
Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure like a withered thorn.

Cowper is not asserting here that poetry should devote itself exclusively or chiefly to "sacred" themes, using the word in its narrow sense. One

might as well contend that all the masons and carpenters should build only "sacred" buildings. But he says:

> Satire has long since done his best; and curst
> And loathsome Ribaldry done his worst.
> Fancy has sported all her powers away
> In tales, in trifles, and in children's play,
> It is the sad complaint, and almost true,
> Whate'er we write we bring forth nothing new.
> 'T were new indeed to have a bard, on fire,
> Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre.
> And tell the world still kindling as he sung,
> With more than mortal music on his tongue,
> That He who dies below, and reigns above
> Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.

These lines are a definite plea for a kind of song that we call a hymn. It expresses a desire that had been stirring among the poets as well as among common people for a lively spontaneous lyrical expression of religious faith and aspiration. The greater poets had felt the stirring.

Even Dryden had turned the "Te Deum" into heroic couplets, thus bringing this and other Latin hymns into the poetic form of his day. Pope had placed at the end of his "Essay on Man" "A Universal Prayer," which was almost a hymn.

The first stanza, for example, is hymnal:

> Father of all, in every age
> In every clime adored
> By saint, by savage and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

But the following stanza is not good hymnody, though it may be good poetry and is good Christianity:

> Let not this weak unknowing hand
> Presume thy bolts to throw
> And deal damnation round the land
> On each I judge thy foe.

If the last two lines of this stanza are lyric, they are not hymnologically lyric. "Damnation" is not quite a hymn word. It is hard to imagine any situation in which "deal damnation round the land" could be appropriately sung by a group of men, women, and children gathered for worship.

The following are good hymn lines, and show that Pope might have been a notable hymnist:

> Teach me to feel another's woe,
> To hide that fault I see.
> That mercy I to others show
> That mercy show to me.
> To thee whose temple is all space,
> Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
> One chorus let all being raise,
> All nature incense rise!

These lines show the stirring of English hymnody among these larger poets.

As Pope had ended his "Essay on Man" with a lyrical religious summary, James Thomson closed his "Seasons" with a "Hymn." The first lines are:

> These as they change, Almighty Father! these
> Are but the varied God. The rolling year
> Is full of thee.

It is a noble poem, but it is not the type of poetry that the hymn-book contains.

Shenstone left no attempted hymns, but he found sweetness even in the rugged Sternhold. In "The Schoolmistress" he gives a picture of rural England piety:

> Here oft the dame, on Sabbath's decent eve
> Hymnèd such psalms as Sternhold forth did mete;
> If winter 't were, she to her hearth did cleave,
> But in her garden found a summer seat;
> Sweet melody! to hear her then repeat
> How Israel's sons . . .
> For she was just and friend to virtuous lore.

Robert Burns later in his poetry pictures the charm and force of hymns, though he never wrote a very good one. His vivid picture of the Scottish family gathered at the fireside singing the hymns of Scotland shows that he loved these hymns; he believed that

> From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs.

The following quatrain, "On Taking Leave at a Place in the Highlands," may indicate, better than pages of speculation about it, why he wrote no successful hymns:

When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come,
In heaven itself, I 'll ask no more
Than just a highland welcome.

One refuses to believe that he did not find it; but one sees that this lyric hope is not exalted enough, or at any rate not highly enough expressed, for sober folk to sing at kirk on the Sabbath day. Burns was not a hymnist. His "Prayer on the Prospect of Death" is an expression for one person only, not for a group, as the first stanza will show:

O thou unknown, Almighty cause
Of all my hope and fear,
In whose dread presence ere an hour
Perhaps I must appear!

Burns's rendering of the "Nineteenth Psalm" is far inferior to Watts's; as far inferior one might say as Dr. Watts's love poem, had he left one, would have been to Burns's "O My Luve 's Like a Red, Red Rose":

O thou the first and greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place.

Anne Steele, "Theodosia" (1716–79), is in point of time the first woman writer of English hymns. She was the daughter of a Baptist preacher. She was never married, and she lived quietly all her days in a quiet town. Her best hymn is:

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at the throne of grace
Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart
Which makes me live to thee.

Let the sweet hope that thou art mine,
My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine
And crown my journey's end.

The "Sacred Songs" of Thomas Moore, published in 1815, though they were written for hymns, each being provided with an appropriate air, are not hymns as the hymn-book understands the term. The galloping meters and peculiar fancies are not consonant with hymnody. There is among these poems, however, one exception, though it was largely revised before it could be said to fit the hymn type:

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er you languish,
Come at God's altar, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
"Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

Joy of the desolate, Light of the straying,
Hope when all others die, fadeless and pure,
Here speaks the comforter, in God's name saying—
"Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure."

Go ask the infidel what boon he brings us,
What charm for aching hearts he can reveal,
Sweet as that heavenly promise Hope sings us
"Earth hath no sorrow that God cannot heal."

Now, the type of verse called the hymn is as strict as the sonnet in its requirements; only the requirements are different and less tangible. This poem of Moore's as it stands does not meet them. Before consulting the hymn-book, one may glance over Moore's original poem and mark certain changes that the hymn-book is sure to demand before the piece is admitted.

The first line is good, magnificently good hymnody, except for its grammatical discord. The hymn book will choose between the archaic "ye" and "you," probably choosing the archaic form changing "has" in the last line of each stanza to "hath." The first half of the second line scans too roughly; one measure is lacking. The first line of the third stanza is a challenge to an argument. And while the great hymners, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Watts, Wesley, Keble, and the rest, have usually been ready enough to debate, their hymns, being lyrical, have not been the vehicle of argument. Good hymns do not argue. Another fault with the last stanza—not so slight, either, as it would at first appear—is that there is no cesura readily apparent in the third line.

The composition as a genuine hymn was first published [1] in 1832 in a book entitled "Spiritual Songs

[1] C. S. Nutter, "Hymns and Hymn-Writers," New York, 1911.

for Social Worship," with alterations, and with the last stanza supplanted by a new one, probably written by Thomas Hastings, who was one of the editors of the book. In the first line "you" was changed to "ye." The second line now reads:

> Come to the mercy seat; fervently kneel.

The second stanza was altered thus:

> Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
> Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure;
> Here speaks the comforter, tenderly saying,
> "Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure."

The hymn closes with the supplied stanza:

> Here see the bread of life; see waters flowing
> Forth from the throne of God, pure from above;
> Come to the feast of love; come ever knowing
> Earth hath no sorrow but heaven can remove.

"Hymns Ancient and Modern" and "The English Hymnal," both conservative about accepting "amendments," do not include this hymn probably because it would, of course, not do without some kind of amendment. Most of the American hymn-books do include it, assigning its authorship jointly to Moore and Hastings. In this I think the American books are right. Hymns are, after all, partially folk-poetry, and of so impersonal a nature that the name of the author has not the significance that it has in other poetry. Indeed, for a long time it was not customary to indicate the names of authors in

the hymn-books. In some of the best hymnals today authors' names are given only in indexes at the back. The hymn-books generally have not considered individual authorship so important as to prevent some natural growth in an immature hymn, or to cut away dead and crooked branches. "Come Ye Disconsolate" is an example of an immature poem growing by "folk-culture" into one of the first-rate hymns of the language.

In Byron's book of songs, "Hebrew Melodies," published in 1815, with music, there is no true hymn. "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold" was included in a few books of the middle of the last century; but it is a spirited song of war rather than of devotion. Neither of his renderings of the Psalms is a good hymn. The better one begins:

> In the valley of waters we wept on that day
> When the host of the stranger made Salem his prey.
> And our heads on our bosoms droopingly lay,
> And our hearts were so full of the land far away.

His most earnest and devout religious song contains a single word that led to "numerous attacks upon the noble author's religion"[1] and to a vigorous reply from the noble author. The troublesome monosyllable was "if" in

> If that high world which lies beyond
> Our own, surviving Love endears;

[1] "The Works of Lord Byron," Vol. III, p. 383, note. Murray, London, 1900.

If there the cherished heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears—
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears,
Lost in thy light—Eternity!

It must be so; 't is not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
The striving to o'erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to being's severing link.
O that in future let us think
To hold each heart the best that shares,
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!

However fine music Byron and his collaborators might have set these lines to, and however many hymn-books might have included them, one does not have to know much about hymns to see that the involved statement of this idea—"If what we say we believe to be true is really so, how sweet it would be to die right now!"—would not be sung as part of the service of the church.

This evident stir of the hymn sentiment among the larger figures of the time was felt also among uncounted humbler ones. There was a true democracy in this realm of poetry. Any man under his own vine and fig-tree could have his own harp. Hundreds—thousands—of hymns found their way into print; many more thousands were perhaps mercifully not preserved. Most of the verses are of

course not poetry but honest rimes carrying right ideas and good sentiment. Among them all there are a few superb hymns. William Williams, a devout itinerant Welsh preacher, wrote many hymns; one of them, "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," still lives as his great contribution to the hymn-book. Benjamin Beddome (1717–95), a leader of the Baptists of England, wrote many hymns, 830 of which were collected and published by his friends. "Did Christ o'er Sinners Weep?" is perhaps the best known of them. His song on reading the Bible may not have the sweep of lyric wings, but it carries, in noble and not inharmonious words, a most important truth. If one reads these lines gravely he may be surprised to see how rich in truth they grow as he regards them more closely, considering the meaning of the Bible in the history of civilization as well as of individual lives:

God, in the gospel of his Son,
Makes his eternal counsels known:
Where love in all its glory shines,
And truth is drawn in fairest lines.

Here sinners of the humbler frame
May taste his grace and learn his name;
May read in characters of blood
The wisdom, power, and grace of God.

The prisoner here may break his chain,
The weary rest from all his pain,
The captive feel his bondage cease,
The mourner find the way of peace.

Here faith reveals to mortal eyes
A brighter world beyond the skies,
Here shines the light which guides his way
From earth to realms of perfect day.

O grant us grace, Almighty Lord,
To read and mark thy holy word,
Its truth with meekness to receive,
And by its holy precepts live.

John Byrom, a fellow in Trinity College, Oxford, wrote a number of hymns, but one of which, "Christian, Awake, Salute the Happy Morn," survives. In 1787 Dr. John Rippon published "A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors," which contained a new hymn signed with the initial "K."—"How Firm a Foundation." This exultant song of faith, one of the great hymns of the eighteenth century, closes with these words:

The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I 'll never, no never, no never forsake.

These lively songs of the latter half of the eighteenth century show a genuine hunger after righteousness; they are joyful in the sense of the soul's freedom to reach toward heaven, and they are unshakably certain of the infinite power and goodness of God.

CHAPTER VII

BISHOP HEBER AND THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

A NEW period of English hymnody centers around Reginald Heber, who with Watts and Wesley stands in the succession of master writers of hymns. Heber was guided by three ideas in regard to the hymn, none of which was new, yet the union of which was new and highly important. The first idea was that of Bishop Ken and others, and of course the medieval church, that the hymn is liturgical and should follow and adapt itself to the church calendar throughout the year; the second idea was that of Watts, the Wesleys, and the Baptist leaders that the hymn should follow and supplement the sermon; the third idea, so urged by Addison, was that the hymn should be a finished piece of literary art. Heber strove to create and have adopted by the Church of England not a psalm-book, nor a psalm-and-hymn-book, but a hymnal to accompany the Book of Common Prayer as a part of the church service; he strove to create and collect a body of hymns which should be of most practical use to instruct and inspire the people and which at the same time should be poems of high literary excellence.

Reginal Heber was born at Malpas, Cheshire, in

1783. His father was a minister of the Church of England, a learned, well-to-do, devout man, a clergyman of the type which all along has carried with zealous good works a certain rich comeliness of life. After a brilliant career at Oxford, Reginald Heber spent fourteen more or less idyllic years at Hodnet as a country squire, a country parson, and a man of letters. During this period, with the advice and contributions of Scott, Milman, and others, he virtually finished his hymn-book. As Bishop of Calcutta he left for India in 1823. He died in India after three years of missionary work in which he combined superbly the good qualities of the modern administrative expert with those of old-time saint. His book, "Hymns Written and Adapted for the Weekly Church Service of the Year," was never officially adopted, though more than any other book it brought hymn singing into the Established Church. Further than that, it set a new standard for the whole of English hymnody.

And a standard was needed. The opening of the century brought a wide-spread and, as has been said, democratic publication and use of hymns. Books were published not only in London but in Southampton, Manchester, and other towns over England as well as in America. There was a copious output of original hymns by various authors, in addition to collections of old and new hymns made for various chapels, parishes, or individuals. Between 1800 and 1820 there were nearly fifty differ-

ent hymn-books in use in the Church of England alone; and yet the Church of England was still largely of the mind that hymn singing was a Dissenting innovation; the metrical Psalms were still in use and regarded as standard.

Indeed, during these years the growth of hymnody had been so rapid and strong as to become disquieting to many; earnest efforts were made to limit it by church ordinances. The liberals, however, and the group of religious revivalists that was gathering at Oxford, instead of trying to restrict and curb the hymn, began to improve it and to use it powerfully for their purpose. Reactionary opposition but served to raise more singing; and, further, the wholesome competition for excellence among the singing people contributed to a great advance in English hymnody. In 1827 appeared the great books of Heber and Keble. That of Montgomery had appeared two years before. Besides the vigorous native hymnody, there was coming in also a new wealth of translations.

In the midst of all this development of hymnody, it was Heber's book that, more than any other, set the standard. Heber maintains a higher literary level than is maintained by any other author of a large number of hymns. He brought some of the strong intellectual and artistic influences of the time into the hymn-book.

Six of Heber's most famous hymns may be mentioned, each representing a different conception of

hymnody and a different manifestation of the religious spirit. Each is a masterpiece of its type. They show the breadth of their author's understanding and sympathy; they indicate the intensity and depth of his religion. "Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning" is a calendar hymn for the feast of the Epiphany, liturgical, glittering, stately; "The Son of God Goes Forth to War" is a call of churchly zeal, personal, evangelical, militant; "By Cool Siloam's Shady Rill" is an exquisite nature poem as well as an exquisite hymn; "Bread of the World in Mercy Broken" is a quiet communion hymn full of pensive loveliness and warm reality of faith; "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" is a hymn for foreign missions, immediately practical, yet blithely, almost gaily, romantic; "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" is a hymn of grandeur, sonorous, full of the pomp and circumstance of awful worship.

The style of the Epiphany hymn suggests the "wealth of orient pearl and gold" as well as the cool and lively freshness of morning:

> Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
> Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
> Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
> Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.
>
> Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;
> Low lies his head with the beast of the stall;
> Angels adore him, in slumber reclining,
> Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Notice the simplicity and beauty of this poem, its clarity, its strength, and its finish. The style is classical, Grecian. The lyric supports its burden of mood and idea with the lightness, the grace, and the surety of the Corinthian column. But above and beyond mere loveliness and strength of form is the beauty and power of its faith: "Richer by far is the heart's adoration."

Notice the difference of movement, of feeling, and of idea in the following lines; the mood is not so much of worship as of energetic and enthusiastic service:

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand;
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river,

From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile?
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strewn;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation, O Salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till o'er our ransomed nature
The lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign.

This hymn was composed by Heber almost impromptu for a particular church service; impromptu, that is, so far as actual composition was

concerned. But expressions like this of course do not come out of small experience and thought; behind it rather is a devoted soul, rich experience, deep loyalty to the church and her mission to the world—loyalty that was to bring him to India later to lay down his life.

With a like readiness the musical setting of this hymn was written; and with like quickness its fame began to spread. A woman in Savannah, Georgia, impressed by reading Heber's hymns, requested a young bank clerk who had gone to Georgia from New England to write a tune for it. This was Lowell Mason, who was to have so large an influence in the music of the hymn-book and therefore in the musical life of Christendom. Lowell Mason's air and this hymn seem now to be one and inseparable.

"From Greenland's Icy Mountains" is essentially modern, "evangelical." Its energy, its experimental eagerness, its ardor for going into new lands, its warm feeling of human kinship, its democratic zeal for world-wide enlightenment and betterment, its air of freedom, its lively faith—all belong to the awakening spirit of the time.

Compare with the foregoing lyrics this rolling hymn of the temple, its grave, rich phrases, its somber tone, its spirit of solemn adoration:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessèd Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see;
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

The lines suggest august cathedral heights and spaces, the spirit of worship described in Milton's "At a Solemn Music," or expressed in the Psalm, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." Its spirit is that of the Hebrew prophets approaching the Sovereign God, that of the medieval worshiper of dread Deity whom none might approach save through mediation as of Virgin and saints. Yet it is one of the hymns most often sung by the church to-day.

Each of these poems is in its own way a fervent and glowing expression of true religion. Each comes from a spirit broad, tolerant, deep enough to express for high and low and broad and narrow Christians a common faith and aspiration. One hymn embodies august contemplation of eternal verity; another, glad enjoyment of immortal beauty become tangible

and visible to man; another, the dynamic impulse of human duty. They are not the work of a versifier aiming to please various tastes; they are the expression, harmonized and confident, of a rich life abundant in its enjoyment of beauty, its perception of truth, its loss of self in joyful service. This early nineteenth-century bishop was moved by zeal like Livingstone's, and by ardor—less spectacular and less wild—like Byron's, to go out to a distant people needing help and to give up his life in their behalf. The lyrics of Heber suggest the English "complete gentleman" after the order of Sir Philip Sidney. Thackeray in "The Four Georges" describes Heber:

> The charming poet, the happy possessor of all sorts of gifts and accomplishments—birth, wit, fame, high character, competence—he was the beloved priest in his home at Hodnet, counselling the people in their troubles, advising them in their difficulties, kneeling often at their sick beds at the hazard of his own life; where there was strife the peacemaker, when there was want, the free giver.

After Watts, Wesley, and Heber, the next major hymn-writer was a Scotsman of Irish descent, James Montgomery (1771–1845), who edited the "Sheffield Iris," a paper of revolutionary political tendencies. Montgomery's life was not calm; on account of his publications he was lodged in jail for three terms of six months each. Happily the last years of his life were more placid; instead of prison sentences and fines he was given a royal pension of two hundred pounds a year.

There is a new development of the English hymn in the verses of Montgomery. The reader is aware in these hymns of the natural surroundings. He sees English scenes and feels the breezes of the seasons blowing; Montgomery is somewhat more at home on the earth than are Watts and Wesley. He did not believe either that

> This world 's a fleeting show
> For man's illusion given,

or that

> This world 's a wilderness of woe,
> This world is not my home,

as Thomas Moore sang in his "Divine Hymns." Instead, Montgomery's hymns contain lines like these:

> The forests in their strength rejoice;
> Hark on the evening breeze,
> As once of old the Lord God's voice
> Is heard among the trees.

> His blessings fall in plenteous showers
> Upon the lap of earth
> That teems with foliage, fruit, and flowers,
> And rings with infant mirth.

> If God hath made this earth so fair,
> Where sin and death abound,
> How beautiful beyond compare
> Will Paradise be found.

In the following lines one catches a glimpse of the English country-side on a Sunday morning:

Not by the brazen trumpet's voice
But the sweet skylark's early lay,
Our tribes are summoned to rejoice
In God their Saviour on this day.

Not to the battle field we throng,
With deadly steel in murderous hands,
But on the hill of peace the song
Of triumph bursts from all our bands.

"Sunshine" and "air" and "freedom" recur again and again in his hymns. He writes much of happiness of paradise, but fully as much about a happy, truth-seeing, and justly dealing earth. His description of the mission of Christ in the world makes an attractive picture of the future of the human race:

He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy,
To those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy
And bid the weak be strong.

To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth,
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in his path to birth.

Before him on the mountains
Shall peace the herald go—
And righteousness in fountains
From hill to valley flow.

This hymn was written at a time when new impulses of freedom were stirring the world, by a man whose faith in liberty and truth had lodged him time and again behind prison bars, and who no less devotedly than his contemporaries, Shelley, Jefferson, Adams, Burke, Franklin, Washington, and the American "embattled farmers," was battling to free human life from the tyranny of common ignorance and wrong-headedness as well as from that of stupid and selfish authority. The reflection comes inevitably that if the Christian theory and practice would affect world politics and individual relations as the hymn describes, human beings have been unfortunate in not giving it a better trial, especially since the opposite theory does not seem to work well. It is easy to say now as it was then that these are lines of a simple visionary. His idea, indeed, is cheerful —that there will be a general enlightenment in the world; that people shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free; that there will be less of the law of the jungle among men; that men shall do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with God

in truth and might and love. This is the enthusiastic teaching of Montgomery's hymn. If these verses are simple and commonplace, so is truth simple; and so is the innate hunger of the human heart a commonplace.

Montgomery published in 1853 "Original Hymns," 355 in number; of these the hymn-book has selected about fifteen, thus ranking him as to number of good hymns next to Wesley and Watts. Some of the individual books with the number chosen from Montgomery's hymns are as follows:

"The Baptist Hymn Book"	25
"The Common Service Book"	14
"The English Hymnal"	10
"The Hymn and Tune Book" (Unitarian)	10
"Hymns Ancient and Modern"	13
"Hymns of Worship and Service"	14
"The Methodist Hymnal"	19
"The New Hymnal" (Protestant Episcopal)	17
"The Oxford [University] Hymn Book"	6
"The Union Hymnal" (Hebrew)	3
"Hymns of the Living Church"	10

Among his best hymns are "According to Thy Gracious Word"; "Angels from the Realms of Glory"; "Forever with the Lord"; "In the Hour of Trial"; "O, Where Shall Rest be Found?" "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire." These are great songs of faith.

In the year of the publication of Heber's hymn-book appeared another book that was to prove im-

mensely popular and influential. This was John Keble's "Christian Year." The book was a lyrical prelude to the Oxford Movement. It quickly attained an enormous popularity; Oxford undergraduates rushed to buy it as did country squires, London society folk, and the reading public throughout the English-speaking world. Keble was called from his obscure country parish to the professorship of poetry at Oxford. At the time of his death in 1866 "The Christian Year" had passed through ninety-six editions; his century esteemed him the greatest of all English religious poets. And although he does not rank in the hymn-book to-day as high as Heber or Montgomery, he is still important and is likely to maintain the hold he now has. His "Voice That Breathed o'er Eden" is probably the most frequently sung of English marriage hymns, and, next to Mrs. Gurney's "O Perfect Love, All Human Love Transcending," the best. Keble's wedding hymn possesses what is a great advantage for a hymn, a poetically attractive first line; Mrs. Gurney's hymn having an arresting first line, grows up with it, whereas Keble's hymn somewhat falls away.

Keble is represented in the hymn-books of to-day by an average of about four lyrics. His "Sun of My Soul" is one of the most familiar and most beautiful of the evening hymns. It is another composition in which the hymners have taken a hand at making perfect; but in this case the improvement has been solely that of elimination. With practical unanimity they have chosen six of Keble's fourteen

original stanzas, the third, seventh, eighth, and last three; the result is a brief, systematic, logically progressive, and complete lyric. The original, entitled "Evening," is the second poem in "The Christian Year":

'T is gone, that bright and orbed blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light.

In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press;
No gleam to watch, on tree or tower,
Whiling away the lonesome hour.

Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

When round Thy wondrous works below
My searching rapturous glance I throw
Tracing Thy wisdom, power, and love,
In earth or sky, in stream or grove;—

Or by the light Thy words disclose,
Watch time's full river as it flows,
Scanning Thy Gracious Providence
Where not too deep for mortal sense:—

When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold;

Let not Thy heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
Forever on my Saviour's breast!

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live!
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die!

Thou framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the tempest Thine own ark!
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port if we have Thee.

The rulers of this Christian land,
'Twixt Thee and us ordained to stand,—
Guide Thou their course, O Lord, aright!
Let all do all as in thy sight.

Oh by Thine own sad burthen, borne
So meekly up the hill of scorn,
Teach Thou Thy priests their daily cross,
To bear as Thine, nor count it loss!

If some poor wandering child of Thine
Have spurned to-day the choice divine;
Now Lord, the gracious work begin;
Let him no more lie down in sin!

Watch by the sick, enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store!
Be every mourner's sleep to-night
Like infant's slumbers, pure and light.

Come now and bless us while we wake,
Ere through the world our course we take;
Till in the ocean of Thy love,
We lose ourselves in Heaven above!

This hymn is such as Wordsworth might have written had he been a country parson; he could not have written a better one. Indeed, Keble's hymn has probably gone into wider fame and exerted larger power than any single poem of Wordsworth's. "Sun of My Soul," for its clear and sweetly flowing lines, for its glow of poetic feeling, for its tense and harmonious expression of the Christian graces of faith, hope, and charity, is likely to live as long as English hymns are sung.

Another great hymnist of his time is Henry F. Lyte (1793–1847), a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and a country rector in Devonshire. In 1834 he published his "Spirit of the Psalms," paraphrases written somewhat in the spirit of the romantic poets; the book received slight attention compared with that given the books of Montgomery, Heber, and Keble. Yet his fame grew to be as secure as theirs by virtue of a single song, "Abide with Me." This is one of the most tender, most fervent, and most poetic of hymns.

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

The simplicity and calm of this lyric reminds one again of Wordsworth. It is a great consolation song of Christianity. People in all sorts of trouble have found relief through this song—its soft music, its bloom of poetic beauty, its deep faith in the goodness of God. It is a grand, strong hymn for souls in trouble; it has added serenity and grace to the end

of many a day; and it has been a sort of sublime lullaby for many a weary body going into the sleep of death.

Legends have gathered around the great hymns as they have gathered about the lives of certain saints and sages. There seems to be no doubt as to the truth of the romantic account of the writing of Lyte's famous hymn. In his later years he had written a poem, "Declining Days," containing these lines:

> O thou whose touch can lend
> Life to the dead, thy quickening grace supply;
> And grant me swan-like, my last breath to spend
> In song that may not die.

And it came about that one day after the celebration of holy communion he bade his flock good-by; in the evening from his bed he handed to some one near a paper; a few moments later he was dead. On the paper was found written this song that may not die.

Young John Henry Newman wrote "Lead, Kindly Light" in the midst of great stress and struggle. He was on a ship becalmed for a week in the Straits of Bonifacio, yet in the midst of the fiercest storm. He tells in the "Apologia pro Vita Sua," Chapter III, of the writing of the hymn. Physically ill, so homesick that he sat on the bedside and wept, he was going through intellectual and spiritual struggle typical of the struggles going on in Europe.

I had fierce thoughts against the liberals. Great events were happening at home and abroad which brought out into form and passionate expression the various beliefs which had so gradually been winning their way into my mind. Shortly before, there had been a revolution in France. . . . Again, the great Reform Agitation was going on around me as I wrote.

The poem was published in "The British Magazine" in 1834.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years!

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

This is one of the hymns that never needed any kind of revision to fit it for the hymn-book. Three

changes have been made, but only in the title: Newman headed the poem first, "Faith—Heavenly Leadings"; next, in "Lyra Apostolica," "Unto the Godly There Ariseth up a Light in the Darkness"; then, in "Occasional Verses," 1868, he called it "The Pillar of Cloud." This is another of the rare songs that are perfect poetry and perfect hymnody. The few "amendments" that have been attempted serve but to show the futility of trying to better it. One of these attempts reads:

> So long thy power hath blest me, *surely* still
> 'T will lead me on,
> Through dreary hours, through pain and sorrow, till
> The night is gone.

This seems to be an effort to compel the hymn to do what Dr. Johnson said hymnody must do, "reject the image and colorings of poetic discourse." "Send kindly Light" is another curiously dull effort at emendation.

Cardinal Newman—he was of course a member of the Church of England when he wrote "Lead, Kindly Light"—did not write another remarkable hymn, though a good portion of the hymn-book "Lyra Apostolica" is made up of his hymns. Some of these are moderately good verses; most of them but emphasize the rarity and difficulty of the type. The hymn CIII in "Lyra Apostolica" may be taken as an example. It begins with the same image as his great hymn. But observe how controversy has driven out the spirit and breath of poetry:

Poor wanderers! yea, ye sore distrest
To find the path which Christ hath blest,
Tracked by his saintly throng;
Each claims to trust his own weak will,
Blind idol—so ye languish still,
All wranglers and all wrong.

He saw of old, and met the need
Granting you prophets of your creed;
And throes of fear to 'suage,
They fenced the rich bequests He made
And sacred bands have safe conveyed
Their charge from age to age.

Wanderers come home, when erring most
Christ's Church aye kept the faith, nor lost
One grain of holy truth;
She ne'er has erred as those ye trust
And now shall lift her from the dust
And REIGN as in her youth!

"Lead, Kindly Light," serene, inspired poetry, needs no words spelled in capitals nor exclamation points at the end. And there is nothing of wrangling in the religion of this hymn. Its mood of fervent, humble prayer and the lyric charm of its words and rhythms have carried this hymn to the heart of Christendom. The difficulty of the half-line, "I loved the garish day," wherein is an unhappy figure suggesting preference of a torch at night to broad open day to travel by—this slight infelicity is submerged like a stone in the brook by the full swift

current of the poetry. The line describing the trials and hardships of life by "moor and fen and crag and torrent" is richly suggestive of the wild beauty of old romance; and what a poetic imaging of this troubled life! The last two lines are a triumph of lyric art and at the same time of Christian hope.

Henry Hart Milman, who had preceded Keble as professor of poetry at Oxford, and who later became one in the succession of famous deans of St. Paul's, wrote twelve hymns for Bishop Heber's book; two of these, "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty," and "When Our Heads Are Bowed with Woe," are still well known.

Sir John Bowring, member of Parliament, editor of the "Westminister Review," sometime governor of Hong Kong, famous scholar, published two volumes of hymns, one in 1823, another in 1825. Two of his hymns seem to be among the imperishable poems of the language: "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," and "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." Bowring was a great progressive; he delighted in the new intellectual awakening, and had strong faith in the beneficence of scientific knowledge. In the hymn "Upon the Gospel's Sacred Page" he says:

> On mightier wing, in loftier flight,
> From year to year does knowledge soar.

Yet he had no fear for religious truth.

> And as it soars, the Gospel light
> Becomes effulgent, more and more.

To Bowring the rising doubts of his time were but a dark background for the bright sureties of the Christian religion. None of the old carols have surpassed the following dramatic hymn in its atmosphere of Christmas-night enchantment, and in lyric statement of Christian hope:

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveller, o'er yon mountain height
See that glory-beaming star!

Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Traveller, yes: it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher, yet that star ascends.
Traveller, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends!

Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveller, ages are its own,
See it bursts o'er all the earth!

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveller, darkness takes its flight;
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.

Watchman, let thy wandering cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home!
Traveller, lo, the Prince of Peace,
Lo, the Son of God is come!

James Edmeston (1791–1867) published, among other volumes, "Sacred Lyrics," 1821. Two of his more than two thousand published hymns remain, "Lead Us, Heavenly Father, Lead Us," and the more famous evening hymn:

> Saviour, breathe an evening blessing
> Ere repose our spirits seal;
> Sin and want we come confessing;
> Thou canst save and thou canst heal.
>
>
>
> Though destruction walk around us,
> Though the arrow near us fly,
> Angel guards from thee surround us.
> We are safe if thou art nigh.

These are musical, sweet lines of confidence and repose of spirit. The last stanza is a notable example of Christian calm in the face of danger, and exultation in the face of death.

Oxford has had much to do with making the hymn-book. Hugh Stowell, who went out to become one of the most popular preachers of his time and who was one of the most vigorous opponents of the Tractarians, published the year after he left Oxford his one great hymn, "From Every Stormy Wind That Blows." With the full glow of the fervor of true religion, this hymn combines a literary finish that reaches finality. At the first words, it rises into lyric flight as with free sweep of strong wings.

From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes;
There is a calm, a sure retreat:
'T is found beneath the mercy seat.

There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place than all besides more sweet:
It is the blood-bought mercy seat.

There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend:
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy seat.

Ah! whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed;
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,
Had suffering saints no mercy seat?

There, there, on eagle wings we soar,
Where time and sense seem all no more;
And Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
While glory crowns the mercy seat.

The term "mercy seat" gives probably no definite picture to most persons who read the poem; one feels that it means the Source of Goodness: it is not necessary to the effect of the hymn to visualize the tabernacle ritual of the mercy seat. Many hymn-books have unfortunately changed the line,

Where time and sense seem all no more,

to read,

And sin and sense molest no more.

Perhaps the revisers did not like the use of "all," a word that Tennyson delights to use in similar slightly oblique ways. Perhaps they desired to add a touch of homily by the word "sin." At any rate, the revision will not stand. The thrilling abandon of devotion in the last stanza, the grand triumph of spirit over flesh, is too strong for some of the milder books. It is the climax of Stowell's poem and should be kept:

> O may my hand forget her skill,
> My tongue be silent, stiff, and still,
> My bounding heart forget to beat.
> If I forget the mercy seat.

The matter of literary sources in the study of hymns is usually not difficult if one is familiar with the Psalms. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," is part of the 137th Psalm. The idea of the hymn is based on Exodus 25:21–22: "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And then I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee above the mercy seat."

The hymn may be called good literary art; and it is likely that some millions of persons have found it a very adequate expression of religious faith and hope.

One imagines that English poetry, and the hymn-

book in particular, must have suffered great loss by the early, sad death of Henry Kirke White, who wrote such hymnal lines as:

> Howl, winds of night, your force combine;
> Without his high behest
> Ye shall not, in the mountain pine,
> Disturb the sparrow's nest.

and:

> He yokes the whirlwind to his car
> And sweeps the howling skies,

and the hymn "When Marshaled on the Nightly Plain," closing with the lines,

> For ever and forevermore,
> The Star, the Star of Bethlehem!

and the more familiar hymn beginning,

> Oft in danger, oft in woe.

Sir Robert Grant (1785–1838), prominent in English letters and politics, member of Parliament, privy councilor, governor of Bombay, wrote many hymns, two of which survive. Two stanzas from "O Worship the King" show its high poetic imagination:

> Oh, tell of his might, oh, sing of his grace!
> Whose robe is the light, whose canopy, space.
> His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,
> And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

His litany hymn, "Saviour, When in Dust to Thee," is a poignantly beautiful expression of penitence and adoration.

One remembers that in the year 1830 an old order was giving place to a new one. Byron and Keats were dead; Scott died in 1832, Coleridge in 1834; Shelley had been dead eight years—though his ideas were being scattered, as by his plea and prophecy in the "Ode to the West Wind":

Scatter as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words, among mankind.

And a new spring was not far behind. Alfred Tennyson published the "Lady of Shalott" volume of poems in 1832; Browning published "Pauline" in 1833; Carlyle wrote "Sartor Resartus" in 1831. The Reform Bill was passed; the new scheme of public education was forming; factories and railroads were building. George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and Walt Whitman were in school. That women were going to school is a notable fact that soon manifests itself in the hymn-book. In 1830 Tennyson, Darwin, Gladstone, Poe, Chopin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Lincoln were all just twenty-one. Emerson and Carlyle were discovering each other and the new world of German thought. In 1833 slavery was abolished in the British possessions. Emigrants

were crowding westward. English social and industrial life was breaking from its old shell, with new wings—to be singed and smoked—but still, wings. The Transcendental and Unitarian and abolition movements were on in New England. The Romanticists were hearing

> The still sad music of humanity,

and the Realists were beginning to see and stress humanity's obviously cold and ugly aspects with a view to betterment. Hopeful idealism, too, was alive and active. New political ideas and new social and religious questionings and affirmations were stirring like wind in the trees. In the field of English hymnody there was a new springtime. New hymns, new collections, and new books of original hymns grew and multiplied.

A few of the hymns of the time, selected by the suffrage of the hymnals of the present, reveal the morning-time vigor and arousal. They show a spirit of travail, of militancy and hope which has always characterized times when hymn writing has most flourished. Following are first lines of a few hymns representative of the great number which appeared:

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning;
Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious;
From Greenland's icy mountains;
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;
The Son of God goes forth to war;
In the cross of Christ I glory;

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Breast the wave, Christian;
Ride on, ride on in majesty;
Christian, seek not yet repose;
The morning light is breaking.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." These hymns and the others like them show that with the industrial, political, scientific, and philosophical arousal of the time there was new life and vigor in the religion of the people. In the following stanza from Henry Buckall's translation from the German of F. von Conitz (1700), three things may be noted as to the trend of English hymnody: (1) Oxford University is again a mainspring of hymnody; (2) foreign influence is felt anew; (3) the hymn takes new freedom of form, being no longer confined to the long, common, and short meters:

Come, my soul, thou must be waking,
Now is breaking
O'er the earth another day;
Come to him who made this splendor,
See thou render
All thy feeble strength can pay.

In America, too, the south winds were blowing, and the sound of new hymns was heard in the land. The first really standard hymn produced in America had been published in 1800 by Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, in his edition and revision of Watts's Psalms:

I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode.

It is a simple, strong melodious song of love for the church. The fourth stanza may be quoted as an example of what hymnal poetry ought to be. Its high sincerity of devotion is like that of the saints and martyrs. Its four simple lines move in stately eloquence of description.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Another American hymn that may be placed in the first rank was written in 1830 by a young schoolteacher, Ray Palmer, who had that year been graduated from Yale. It grew out of a hard struggle of discouragement, illness, and religious uncertainty. Years later Palmer told of the writing of it. "There was not the slightest thought," he said, "of writing for another eye, least of all writing a hymn for Christian worship. I gave from what I felt by writing the stanzas, with little effort. I recalled that I wrote them with very tender emotion, and penned the last stanza with tears." The hymn begins:

My faith looks up to thee,
Thou lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine:
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,

O let me from this day
Be wholly thine.

In few strong words, like swift marching, it speaks of life and death and immortality, and the reach of the human soul toward God. Notice the lyric power of the last stanza, its statement of the transience of life, its somber picture of death, and its glow of triumphant faith:

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove,
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul.

In 1820 appeared William Cullen Bryant's "Thou Whose Unmeasured Temple Stands," written for the dedication of a church. If the friendly warmth and charity of these peaceful lines, and the sturdiness of their faith, does animate the folk singing as they dedicate their church, that church will likely be a fountain of welfare among men and of glory to God. Notice the hymn-book's idea of the purpose of a church in a community:

May they who err be guided here
To find the better way;
And they who mourn, and they who fear,
Be strengthened as they pray.

May faith grow firm and love grow warm,
And hallowed wishes rise;

While round these peaceful walls the storm
Of earth-born passion dies.

Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" in 1814 and the hymn, "Lord, with a Glowing Heart I 'd Praise Thee," in 1826. The hymn has not the spontaneity and lyric fire of the splendid if flamboyant war-song. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is too martial a song to be the ultimate "national anthem" of a peace-loving people; yet certain editors, finding it to need an extra touch of pugnacity, have changed an important word in the last stanza,

Then conquer we must, *when* our cause it is just,

Key wrote it:

Then conquer we must, *for* our cause it is just.

George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey, published in 1834 his famous evening hymn, a graceful lyric full of gentleness and piety:

Softly now the light of day
Fades upon my sight away;
Free from care, from labor free,
Lord, I would commune with thee.

He wrote also the militant evangelical hymn "Fling Out the Banner." Some books have felt it necessary to modify the force of this hymn by changing the words "Fling out the banner" to "Uplift the banner." They had better leave it as it is.

Fling out the banner! let it float
Skyward and seaward, high and wide:
The sun shall light its shining folds,
The cross on which the Saviour died.

Uplift the banner! Angels bend
In anxious silence o'er the sign,
And vainly seek to comprehend
The wonder of the love divine.

Fling out the banner! Heathen lands
Shall see from far the glorious sight,
And nations gathering at the call,
Their spirits kindle in its light.

The President of the United States from 1825 to 1829, John Quincy Adams, as has been mentioned, was the author of a book of psalms and hymns. One of Adams's poems, first published in Boston in January, 1807, carries the same central idea as Henry Vaughan's "Retreat," and as Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immorality," published the same year. Stanzas of the poem follow:

That inextinguishable beam
With dust united at our birth,
Sheds a more dim, discolored gleam,
The more it lingers upon earth.

Closed in his dark abode of clay,
The stream of glory faintly burns,
Not unobscured the lurid ray
To its own native fount returns.

But when the Lord of mortal breath
Decrees his bounty to resume,
And points the silent shaft of death,
Which speeds the infant to the tomb,—

No passion fierce, no low desire,
Has quenched the radiance of the flame;
Back to its God the living fire
Returns unsullied as it came.

Two of the best of the Christmas hymns were written by Edmund H. Sears, a Unitarian clergyman of Massachusetts. "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night" appeared in 1834; "It Came upon a Midnight Clear" was written fifteen years later.

Calm on the listening ear of night
Come Heaven's melodious strains,
Where wild Judea stretches far
Her silver-mantled plains.

Celestial choirs from courts above
Shed sacred glories there;
And angels with their sparkling lyres
Make music in the air.

The answering hills of Palestine
Send back the great reply,
And greet, from all their holy heights,
The Day-spring from on high;

O'er the blue depths of Galilee
There comes a holier calm;
And Sharon waves, in solemn praise
Her silent groves of palm.

These two stanzas may be taken as representative of the new type of hymn which was gaining higher and higher advancement in the citizenship of English poetry. They approach the ideal which Heber held for the hymn as finished poetry.

The stanzas, too, may be taken as illustrative of the new spirit of New England puritanism then rising into song, a kind of song that is true artistry of verse and at the same time most zealous and most catholic Christian worship. The stanzas are indicative, also, of intellectual and spiritual alertness and vigor; the reader can hardly fail to be impressed with their strong confidence and aggressiveness; they show something of the fighting zeal of Byron and Shelley, surging, however, with feeling not of revolt but triumphant advance. Hymns written around 1835 abound in such expressions as "Fight the fight," "Cast thy dream of ease away," "The hosts of hell defeat," "There, there, on eagles' wings we soar," "Run the race," and "Lift thine eyes." One notices frequent spirited adjectives as "gleaming," "brightening," "towering," and "soaring."

The hymn about to be quoted is another American one which reflects the spirit abroad in the world, the flush of confidence and enthusiasm for the future aroused by the new mastering of the materials and forces of nature, and by new advances in politics, and philosophy, and religion. These singers have been thrilled by the railroad, the steamship, and other momentous inventions; they have been moved by Wordsworth's impulsive sympathy for the poor,

by the younger poet's fierce rebellion against intellectual and spiritual tyranny, and by such ideas as young Tennyson's, who

> . . . dipt into the future as far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world and all the wonders that would be.

The idea of world-wide kinship and responsibility was stirring in America, as well as in England. The hymn of the young New England Baptist preacher, Samuel F. Smith, is a significant Evangelical expression of new hope for the world:

> The morning light is breaking,
> The darkness disappears;
> The sons of earth are waking
> To penitential tears;
> Each breeze that swells the ocean
> Brings tidings from afar,
> Of nations in commotion,
> Prepared for Zion's war.
>
> See heathen nations bending
> Before the God we love,
> And thousand hearts ascending
> In gratitude above;
> While sinners now confessing,
> The gospel call obey
> And seek the Saviour's blessing,
> A nation in a day.
>
> Blest river of salvation,
> Pursue thy onward way;

Flow thou to every nation,
Nor in thy richness stay;
Stay not till all the lowly
Triumphant reach their home;
Stay not till all the holy
Proclaim the Lord is come.

In 1832 Smith published his famous hymn of liberty, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." The world's emergence into new emancipation of body and soul needed such verse as this song of freedom. It is a wholesome one for a free people to know by heart and to sing with spirit and understanding. Notice how recurrent in every stanza is the idea expressed by "free," "liberty," "freedom."

With the Oxford Movement there was a dividing of the ways for English hymnody: on the one hand, a trend toward free range, toward new discoveries of reality through personal experience, and a will to be up and doing; on the other hand, a conservative regard for the past and a distrust of new things. The awakened interest in ancient liturgies naturally brought the Latin hymns into prominence. John Mason Neale (1818–66), a young Cambridge scholar, joined the Oxford Tractarians and devoted his life thereafter largely to the study and translation of Latin and Greek hymns. And he could hardly have found a better way to help his cause. His translations aroused great admiration for the newly discovered ancient treasury, and new devotion to ancient liturgies and doctrines.

Indeed, Neale and the group of which he was the poetical leader gradually took the position that only those hymns used of old times, or translations of them, were proper or lawful for the church service. This was the same position held by the partisans of Sternhold and Hopkins, except that the latter had wished to restrict hymnody to the Hebrew rather than to the Greek or Latin originals.

It will be seen how the ritual hymn turned its face toward the acts and doctrines of the fathers, to saints' lives, and to holy days and seasons; how the Evangelicals cried, "The morning light is breaking; go labor on, spend and be spent"; and how the hymn-book in the passing years has taken the best poetry and the best religion of both sides and has brought them into a holy catholic harmony.

Frederick Faber represents in his hymns the Roman Catholic and Neale the Anglican Catholic element of the Oxford Movement. Faber was graduated from Oxford in 1836; his completed "Hymns" containing 150 pieces, was published in London in 1861. He says in the preface that he has been endeavoring to do for English Catholicism what Luther's, Wesley's, Cowper's, and Newton's and, later, the Oxford writers' hymns had done for Protestantism. His best and most catholic hymns are "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"; "My God, How Wonderful Thou Art"; "O, Come and Mourn with Me a While"; "Faith of Our Fathers! Living Still"; "Hark, Hark, My Soul, Angelic Songs Are Swelling"; "O Paradise, O Paradise."

The following hymn seems to represent the ideal of practical plainness in hymnody that, as he says at the outset, he is seeking to attain:

O, it is hard to work for God,
To rise and take the part,
Upon this battlefield of earth
And not sometimes lose heart!

He hides himself so wondrously,
As though there were no God;
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Or he deserts us in the hour
The fight is all but lost,
And seems to leave us to ourselves
Just when we need him most.

It is not so, but so it looks;
And we lose courage then;
And doubts will come if God has kept
His promises to men.

But right is right since God is God;
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

If one ask, Is this poetry? it may be replied, It is homely, plain language in rime and measured cadences intending to convey truth in such a way as to encourage people to live just lives, and to inspire

faith in God. The hymn-book accepts it as a moderate hymn. Much of Faber's hymn verse is simple and practically good poetry. Some of his verse has an unhappy touch of physical grossness. Even the following childlike and tender address to the Deity is too physical; and it is not quite true either logically or artistically:

> I could not sleep unless Thy Hand
> Were underneath my head,
> That I might kiss it as I lay
> Wakeful upon my bed.

Note how the following stanza has the same childlike qualities without what is objectionable:

> I worship thee, sweet will of God,
> And all thy ways adore;
> And every day I live I seem
> To love thee more and more.

The hymn-book has happily left out the indecorous and has reserved the hymns of Faber that are pure gold. Faber himself was an erratic judge as well as writer of poetry. He burned his three-volume Shelley and, he says, never regretted it. Francis Thompson makes the remark that he should have thrown some of his hymnody into the fire with it. So might—and doubtless has—every poet destroyed to advantage some lines. The hymns containing the following verses have gone, with no loss to the hymnal:

> I heard the wild beasts in the woods complain.

Man's scent the untamed creature scarce can bear
As if his tainted blood defiled the air.

Labor itself is but a sorrowful song
The protest of the weak against the strong.

Faber's "Pilgrims of the Night" is a hymn of deep loveliness:

Hark! hark! my soul! angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore;
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life where sin shall be no more.
Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome
The pilgrims of the night!

Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,
"Come weary souls, for Jesus bids you come";
And through the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the gospel leads us home.
Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome
The pilgrims of the night.

Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee.
Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome
The pilgrims of the night.

Angels sing on! your faithful watches keeping;
Sing us sweet fragments of the songs above;
Till morning's joy shall end the night of weeping
And life's long shadows break in cloudless love.
Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome
The pilgrims of the night.

Two stanzas, one beginning, "Cheer up, my soul!" and one containing the lines,

God hides himself, and grace hath scarcely found us
Ere death finds out his victims in the dark,

have wisely been omitted. This is a hymn that "as the bird, wings and sings."

Many, even most, of John Mason Neale's large number of translations issued around the middle of the century read like scholarly exercises in translation; they have not in them, somehow, the fire of poetry. Full of ecclesiastical imagery and symbols and briefly stated dogmas, they remind one of the ordinary conventional church windows. This is not saying that the church windows—and the verses—are not earnest enough. But their colors are often not rich, and the execution is often not very authentic. The following is an example from a eucharistic hymn:

The Heav'nly WORD proceeding forth,
Yet leaving not the FATHER'S side,
Went forth unto his work on earth
Until He reached life's eventide.

By false disciples to be given
To foemen for his death athirst,
Himself the Bread of Life from Heaven,
He gave to his disciples first.

.

By birth their fellow man must be;
Their meat when sitting at the board;
He died their Ransomer to be;
He ever reigns their great reward.

Such symbolic terms for Christ as "Key of the house of David" and "Pelican of Mercy" are not convincing to the English ear.

Whatever the following may be in another language, it is neither poetry nor hymnody in English:

Him of the Father's very essence,
Begotten ere the world began,
And in the latter time of Mary,
Without a human sire, made man.

Unto Him, this glorious morn
Be the strain outpoured!
Thou that liftest up our horn,
Holy art thou, Lord!

.

The earthly Adam erewhile quickened;
By the blest breath of God on high,
Now made the victim of corruption,
By woman's guile betrayed to die.

He deceived by woman's part
Supplication poured;
Thou who in my nature art,
Holy art thou, Lord.

This shows the "liturgical" hymnody at the extreme toward which it is in danger of going. But the following translation shows what the hymnody of the old time may have for the English hymn-book with talented, devout, and scholarly men to translate them; they are Neale's masterpieces:

Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the powers of darkness
Rage thy steps around?
Christian! up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss,
In the strength that cometh
By the holy cross.

Christian, dost thou feel them,
How they work within,
Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin?
Christian, never tremble;
Never be downcast;
Gird thee for the battle;
Watch and pray and fast.

Christian, dost thou hear them,
How they speak thee fair?
"Always fast and vigil,

Always watch and prayer?"
Christian! answer boldly:
"While I breathe I pray!"
Peace shall follow battle,
Night shall end in day.

"Well I know thy trouble,
O my servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too,
And that toil shall make thee
Some day all mine own,
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near my throne."

Neale's dramatic lyric, "Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid?" is based upon an ancient Greek Christian hymn; it is a vivid and powerful poem:

Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
"Come to me," saith One, "and coming,
Be at rest."

Hath he marks to lead me to him
If he be my guide?
"In his feet and hands are wound-prints,
And his side."

Is there diadem, as monarch,
That his brow adorns?
"Yea, a crown, in very surety,
But of thorns."

If I find him, if I follow,
What his guerdon here?
"Many a sorrow, many a labor,
Many a tear."

If I still hold closely to him,
What hath he at last?
"Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,
Jordan passed."

If I ask him to receive me,
Will he say me nay?
"Not till earth and not till heaven
Pass away."

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is he sure to bless?
"Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,
Answer, 'Yes.'"

"Jerusalem the Golden" is one of the three hymns taken from the long hymn "Gloria, Laus et Honor" by Bernard of Cluny; the others are "Brief Life Is Here Our Portion" and "For Thee, O Dear Country." Either the first or last of these would likely have made Neale a permanent place in the story of English song.

Edward Caswall, a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, 1836, was like Faber a zealous disciple of Newman. He entered the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church in 1850. He wrote and

translated from the Latin and German about two hundred hymns. His best contributions are "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee," from the Latin of Bernard of Clairvaux, and "When Morning Gilds the Skies," from a German hymn of unknown authorship, "Beim Frühen Morgenlicht," published in Wurzburg, 1828. It begins:

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart, awaking, cries,
 May Jesus Christ be praised!

Alike at work or prayer,
To Jesus I repair,
 May Jesus Christ be praised!

This hymn comes from Oxford University; Oxford was a spring of hymnody, as was Harvard in the United States. It is from the German.

The romantic lore of German forest and castle, as well as the revival in German philosophy, science, theology, and poetry, influences English life and letters. The religious song of pre-Reformation Germany, fostered early by Notker and his followers, and brought by Luther and those who followed him into a luxuriant growth of splendid and powerful popular hymnody, had first begun to be heard in England through John Wesley and the Moravian immigrants. Now, under the new impulses, English hymnologists found much in the German to

engage them. "There cannot be," says Philip Schaff, in Julian's "Dictionary of Hymnology," "less than one hundred thousand published German hymns, nearly one thousand of which are classical and immortal."

Of all these hymns certainly the best known, if not the best, is the "Ein Feste Burg" of Martin Luther. It is translated and sung in practically all the languages of the world. Julian's "Dictionary" gives a list of sixty translations in English alone. The best two renderings are Thomas Carlyle's "A Safe Stronghold Our God Is Still" and Frederick H. Hedge's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." In the English hymn-book, so far, that of Carlyle is the favorite; in the American, that of Hedge. Both renderings are picturesque and sturdy hymns. The American version is really the better. The first stanza of Carlyle's version is as follows:

A safe stronghold is our God still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He 'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his fellow.

Carlyle's version was published in 1831; Hedge's, which follows below, in 1858:

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper he, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
But still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing,
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth is his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim—
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers—
No thanks to them—abideth;
The spirit and the gifts are ours
Through him who with us sideth.

Let goods and kindreds go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

This hymn has been like a flame and a cloud before the people through the years since Luther wrote it.

Another great German hymn which has come with much spirit into the English hymn-book is "Versage Nicht, Du Häuflein Klein," translated, "Fear Not, O Little Flock, the Foe," by Catherine Winkworth. The authorship of the original is uncertain. It has been attributed to Gustavus Adolphus, who with his army sang it at the battle of Lützen in 1631—triumphantly, although the king himself was mortally wounded in the battle.

Eighty-four of the hymns of Paul Gerhardt (1607–76) have found their way into standard English hymn-books. An illuminating study has been made by Professor Theodore Brown Hewitt of Gerhardt's part in the making of the present English hymnal.[1] Dr. Hewitt lists over three hundred translations and adaptations from Gerhardt's hymn. Among these are: "Commit Thou All Thy Griefs" and "Give to the Wind Thy Fears," by John Wesley; "All My Heart This Night Rejoices" and "Since Jesus Is My Friend Here Can I Firmly Rest," by Catherine Winkworth; "How Shall I Receive Thee?" by A. T. Russell; and "O Sacred Head

[1] "Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn-Writer and His Influence on English Hymnody," Yale University, New Haven, 1918.

Now Wounded," by J. W. Alexander, of Virginia. "Sacred Hymns from the German," a volume of translations by Francis E. Cox, published in 1841, contained the well known Easter hymn, "Jesus Lives," "Jesus Lebt, mit Ihm auch Ich," by Christian Gellert (1715–69), and the hymn from Johann Scheffler (1624–77) beginning:

> Earth hath nothing sweet or fair,
> Goodly form or beauties rare,
> But before my eyes they bring
> Christ, of beauty source and spring.

From the volume of Richard Massie we have the paraphrase, "I Know No Life Divided," of Carl Spitta's hymn, "O Jesu Meine Sonne."

Catherine Winkworth (1829–78) brought out in 1855 the first volume of her series, "Lyra Germanica." She has given several fine hymns to the English hymn-book through these translations; besides those mentioned already are "Now Thank We All Our God" and "Gentle Shepherd, Thou Hast Stilled" and "Now God Be with Us, for the Night Is Closing." The hymn of Joseph Mohr, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht," published in 1818 and translated by Jane Campbell in 1863, has come to be one of the favorites of English Christmas hymns.

Two other notable translators of German hymns were Jane Borthwick and her sister Sarah Borthwick Findlater. They were born in Edinburgh. They published in four series, beginning 1854, "Hymns from the Land of Luther." The best one

of these, according to the selective judgment of the hymn-books, is that beginning, "My Jesus, as thou wilt," from the original by B. Schmolke, "Mein Jesu, Wie Du Willst," written in 1704:

My Jesus, as thou wilt!
O may thy will be mine;
Into thy hand of love
I would my all resign.
Through sorrow and through joy,
Conduct me as thine own,
And help me still to say,
"My Lord, thy will be done."

My Jesus, as thou wilt;
If needy here and poor,
Give me the people's bread,
Their portion rich and sure:
The manna of thy word
Let my soul feed upon;
And if all else should fail,
My Lord, thy will be done.

My Jesus, as thou wilt,
Though seen through many a tear,
Let not my star of hope
Grow dim or disappear;
Since thou on earth hast wept
And sorrowed oft alone,
If I must weep with thee,
My Lord, thy will be done.

My Jesus, as thou wilt;
All shall be well with me;

Each changing future scene
I gladly trust with thee.
Straight to my home above,
I travel calmly on,
And sing in life or death,
My Lord, thy will be done.

A few extracts following indicate new elements of hymnody brought in from the German:

Fair is the meadow
Fairer still the woodland
Robed in the blooming garb of Spring.
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Published 1851. *Both author and translator unknown.*

O Holy Ghost who brooded over the wave,
Descend upon the child;
Give him undying life, his spirit lave
With waters undefiled;
Grant him from earliest years to be
Thy learner apt, a home for thee.

Catherine Winkworth, from the German of Albert Knapp.

Alleluya!
The strain upraise of joy and praise,
They through the fields of Paradise that roam,
The blessed ones repeat through that bright home,
Alleluya!
The planets glittering on their heavenly way,

The shining constellations join and say,
Alleluya!
Ye clouds that onward sweep,
Ye winds on pinions light,
Ye thunders echoing loud and deep,
Ye islands wildly bright,
In sweet content unite,
Alleluya!

J. M. Neale, from "The Sequence of Notker," in the "English Hymnal," No. 974.

Two of the best and most poetical hymns of to-day, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home" and "O Mother Dear, Jerusalem," did not come into the hymn-books generally until the second quarter of the last century, though they had been waiting in manuscript since the sixteenth century, till there was a call for them.

The poem is printed in full in Julian's Dictionary, page 580, from the manuscript in the British Museum. The title is "A Song Made by F. B. P. and to be Sung to the Tune of Diana." Stanzas besides the familiar ones in the two centos are:

In thee noe sicknesse may be seene,
Noe hurt, noe ache, nor sore,
There is noe death, nor uglie devill,
There is life forevermore.

Noe dampishe miste is seene in thee
No cloud, nor darksome night.
There everie soule shines as the sunne,
There God himself giues light.

Thy turrettes and thy pinacles
With carbuncles doe shine.
Thy verie streetes are paved with gould,
Surpassinge cleare and fine.

Within thy gates nothinge doeth come
That is not passing cleane.
No spider's web, no durt, noe dust
No filthe may there be seene.

.

We that are here in banishment
Continuallie doe moane.
We sigh and sobbe, we weepe and weale,
Perpetually we groane.

.

But there they live in such delight
Such pleasures and such play
As that to them a thousand yeares
Doth seeme as yeaster day.

Thy viniardes and thy orchardes are
Most beautifull and faire
Full furnished with trees and fruits
Most wonderful and rare.

.

There is nectar and ambrosia made,
There is muske and civette sweete.
There manie a faire and daintie drugge
Are trodden under feete.

There cinamon and there sugar groes,
There norde and balme abound.
What tongue can tell or hart conceiue
The ioies that there are found.

Quyt through the streetes with silver sound
The flood of life doth flowe
Upon whose banks on everie syde
The wood of life doth growe.

There David standes with harp in hand
As Maister of the Queere.
Ten thousand times that man were blest
That might his musicke hear.

Our Ladie sings magnificat
With tune surpassinge sweete,
And all the virgins beare their parts
Sitting about her feete.

Te Deum doth Saint Ambrose singe,
Sainte Augustine dothe the like.
Ould Simeon and Zacharie
Have not their songes to seke.

There Magdalene hath left her mone
And cheerfullie doth singe
With blessed saints whose harmonie
In everie streete doth ringe.

Hierusalem my happie home,
Would God I were in thee.
Would God my woes were at an end
Thy ioyes that I might see.

A somewhat later version has this stanza:

> There be the prudent Prophets all,
> The apostles six and six;
> The glorious martyrs on a row
> And Confessors betwixt.

The two hymns from this poem were especially pleasing to persons of high church tendencies. Some of the hymn-books have printed most of the stanzas, including the "spider's web" one. Nearly all the hymn-books to-day include at least one hymn from the poem.

In a critical paper on "Hymns Ancient and Modern" in "The Saturday Review" for February 2, 1901, Mr. F. H. Balfour condemns this sort of hymn as being crassly materialistic and absurd. He thinks that such lavish use of gold and jewelry would make a city very glaring and unpleasant. The idea of gold- and silver-winged angels is illogical; the wings would not fold and unfold well, and they would be too heavy to fly with. One can hardly plead in defense of that phase of the hymn without in turn being absurd. The author of the hymn did not mean real gold. It is a figure of speech for the idea of splendid and fortunate estate and great happiness. Gold hair does not mean wire hair. Shakspere's "golden lads and girls" did not mean metal creatures. Of course the figures of the celestial city with walls of precious stones and gates of single pearls show an Oriental and naïve lavishness of imagination. But after all, gold is a con-

ventional word for splendor; and the idea of the hymn is to suggest even more richness than the words imply. These materials, gold, palaces, and jewels are among what Edmund Burke calls in his treatise "On the Sublime and Beautiful," section vii, "those things in nature that raise love and astonishment in us." The names of these objects, Burke says, by long association with abstract ideas, such as, for example, ideas of splendor and happiness, gain great power to call forth those ideas. Further, if a number of such objects are named together they have a cumulative power for expressing the abstract idea. This section of Burke's theory of esthetics reads like a special vindication of this poem. I do not see how a poet could even contrive a figure of speech that was not radically of material substance. If the figures of this poetry suggest pawn-shops rather than supernal happiness, there is little to be said. Poetry does not with *Bottom the Weaver* stop to explain that the lion is not really a lion and that golden wings are not really gold.

The charge against hymns of this kind that they are world-weary, and that the singer of them is too much occupied gazing toward the shade of the trees to do his work in the Lord's harvest field, is a more thoughtful criticism.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the hymn, having by that time defined itself as a distinct type of English verse, has more and more come to its place as a recognized literary form; and a large

number of the more important poets have written hymns. Not all of them have done so; not all of them have had the strong religious impulse that is primarily requisite; not all of them who have written hymns had the gift of finding the phrase and verse form that would express their crowding ideas and emotions and that at the same time would observe the severe restraints that the communal song of worship commands.

Shelley, like Burns, was swayed by emotions at least kin to religion; Wordsworth was profoundly religious. But their expression never took the true hymn form, though each wrote hymnic verse after a fashion. Shelley's "Song for the Men of England" is sung to-day with great feeling at meetings of political and social radicals; but it cannot be called a hymn. His "New National Anthem" beginning,

> God prosper, speed and save,
> God raise from England's grave
> Her murdered Queen!
> Pave with swift victory
> The steps of liberty
> For Britain's own to be
> Immortal Queen!

is a spirited variation of "God Save the King." Its idea is much the same as that of a better known version, "My Country, 'T is of Thee." The important distinction is that Shelley's song conceives liberty as a sort of French Revolution goddess; Smith's, as a human quality. "America" closes

with a devout prayer. Another variation of "God Save the King" is in the hymn-book, "Come Thou Almighty King," a solemn and exalted hymn.

Browning's "Prospice" has been set to music, but it is obviously not hymnal. His great death-song, the "Epilogue to Asolando," a mate to Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," is, broadly speaking, religious in its assertion of individual and happy immortality for the brave, the good, and the true; yet it is not at all a churchly song. It is a cairn of heroic faith, built of rough stones thrown together—words like "fools" and "mawkish," and phrases such as "forward! back and breast as either should be" and "cry, 'Strive and thrive!' " Tennyson's song compared to it is like an altar of polished marble.

In America, Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, and Lanier all contributed to the hymn-book. Poe wrote only some fragments of hymns.

Wordsworth, as has been said, is represented in some of the hymn-books by one poem, which is called "The Laborer's Noonday Hymn." It is dated 1834. The introductory stanzas describing the singers are of course omitted.

> Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
> That drawn from this one hour of rest,
> Are with a ready heart bestowed
> Upon the service of our God!
>
> Each field is then a hallowed spot,
> An altar is in each man's cot,

A church in every grove that spreads,
Its living roof above our heads.

Look up to Heaven! the industrious sun
Already half its course has run;
He cannot halt or go astray,
But our eternal spirits may.

Lord, since his rising in the east
If we have faltered or transgressed
Guide from thy love's abundant course
What yet remains of this day's course.

Help with thy grace through life's short day
Our upward and our downward way;
And glorify for us the west
When we shall sink to final rest.

The poem is pious, wise, and substantial, but as a lyric it plods instead of mounting on wings. It has the air rather of being rimed moral sentiments written by the benevolent Wordsworth for the honest peasant than of being a song springing out of the genuine emotion either of the laborer or of the poet. It is not a good hymn.

Wordsworth's nephew, Christopher Wordsworth (1807–85), Bishop of Lincoln, is a far better hymnist. He published in 1863 a volume, "The Holy Year," containing 127 original hymns. Eight or ten of these are in the hymn-books to-day. One or probably two are likely to survive as permanent great hymns.

"O Day of Rest and Gladness" is the best. It is

distinguished by that lyrical volancy which William Wordsworth's hymn lacks. Bishop Wordsworth was a scholar and an influential churchman of his day. That all of his devoted effort and learning should produce but one or two great hymns is some indication of the difficulty of attaining to the precise balance of piety, simplicity, and poesy which the hymn type demands.

Christina Rossetti wrote some ardent and delicately beautiful religious lyrics. But they are more for the closet of the mystic than for the public assemblage. It was not so with her father's Italian hymns. The hymns he wrote in Italy and the ardor with which they were sung were in some part the reason for his fleeing to England as a refugee from religious persecution in Italy. The hymns of Gabriele Rossetti are still sung by Italian Protestants. The religious songs of both Christina and Dante Rossetti are too florid and too recondite in sentiment for popular hymns.

Stanzas of her "Advent Hymn" may be taken as typical. The poem is full of delicate and pleasant fancies; but these fancies have no special significance for the hymn. The sentiment is peculiar and would have little response from the common readers.

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen; snow on snow,
Snow on snow,

In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there;
Cherubim and Seraphim
Through the air,
But only his Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

These verses remind one of Blake, some of whose religious songs are delicately beautiful poems. But they are too delicate, and their poetic spell is too fragile for the public concourse. Take for example two stanzas from Blake's "On Another's Sorrow" in "Songs of Innocence":[1]

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

O! he gives us to his joy
That our grief he may destroy;
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

One sees how the last line is necessarily individual; it might be exquisite to read by one's fireside, but it

[1] "The Poetical Works of William Blake," p. 78, Oxford edition.

could not be applicable to public assemblages. The following stanzas from "Milton," with the motto, "Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets,"[1] are not far from sublime, yet one sees that they are not quite hymnody:

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

The lines are truly lyric; they soar and they sing. But the aspiration is too immediately ambitious for a hymn. An assembly of people have to be moved by a strong impulse, indeed, to call in song for a chariot of fire. It is true that one of the most devout and popular of the American negro hymns calls for a chariot—

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home—

but the call is not immediate. It is a prayer that death, when it comes, may swing low like a chariot and carry the petitioner home. There is no note of impatience in it. But Blake's song has the mystic's

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 370.

impatience that few gatherings of folk would ever unitedly feel.

Mrs. Browning's poem, "He Giveth His Beloved Sleep," seems to be on the verge of being a splendid hymn. Some of the hymn-books have it; some do not.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if there any is
For gift of grace surpassing this,—
"He giveth his beloved sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart, to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,
The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown, to light the brows?
"He giveth his beloved sleep."

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
"He giveth his beloved sleep."

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap:
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
"He giveth his beloved sleep."

The slightly too conventional "Now tell me—" and its slightly too familiar and rather peculiarly feminine use of the pronoun "we" are hindrances. A greater fault so far as hymnody is concerned is its speculative lack of directness, a kind of loitering. The idea is not swift and straight enough in its movement. Still, it is a religious lyric of unquestioned loveliness; if with adequate music it should be admitted to the hymn-book, it is likely to be, by its sincerity and tenderness and poetic charm, a favorite hymn. Only one other of the group of poems which Mrs. Browning published as "Hymns" is adapted to singing in public worship; it begins,

> Since without thee we do no good,
> And with thee do no ill.

In the ten years following 1840 there is a perceptible ebb of hymnody until toward 1860, when a full tide sets in. There are still some magnificent hymns written, but they are not written with the exuberance, and in the full major key, of the hymns of the eighteen-thirties. A good proportion of the best hymns of this time are by women writers. One of the good hymns is that of Anna Bartlett Warner, who lived in New York. The Mendelssohn air, "Felix," has helped this hymn to go far.

> We would see Jesus; for the shadows lengthen
> Across the little landscape of our life;
> We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
> For the last weariness, the final strife.

We would see Jesus, the great rock foundation
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace:
Nor life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see his face.

We would see Jesus; other lights are paling,
Which for long years we have rejoiced to see;
The blessings of our pilgrimage are failing;
We would not mourn them, for we go to thee.

We would see Jesus; yet the spirit lingers
Round the dear objects it has loved so long,
And earth from earth can scarce unclasp its fingers;
Our love to thee makes not this love less strong.

We would see Jesus; sense is all too blinding,
And Heaven appears too dim, too far away;
We would see thee, thyself our hearts reminding
What thou hast suffered, our great debt to pay.

We would see Jesus: this is all we 're needing;
Strength, joy, and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading;
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night.

Another representative hymn by Anna Laetitia Waring, a Welsh woman, has taken a high place:

In heavenly love abiding,
No change of heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,

But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

Wherever he may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim,
He knows the way he taketh,
And I will walk with him.

Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where darkest clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free,
My Saviour has my treasure,
And he will walk with me.

Mrs. Alexander's "Jesus Calls Us o'er the Tumult" is a good hymn of this period. Mrs. Alexander was a native of Ireland and the wife of the bishop of Derry. Her hymn "There Is a Green Hill Far Away" is one of a small number of English lyrics that owe their fame in large measure to the charm of the first line.

Charlotte Elliott (1787–1871), who published her "Invalid's Hymn Book" in 1838 and "Hymns of Sorrow" two years later, was the author of about a hundred and fifty hymns, three of which have lived: "Christian, Seek Not Yet Repose": "My

God, My Father, While I Stray": and "Just as I Am without One Plea." Miss Elliott was herself an invalid for about fifty years of her long life. Her hymns, like those of Anne Steele, are plaintive and sweet in tone, and expressive of warm and beautiful devotion. The powerful lyric "Just as I Am without One Plea" would have made her fame secure. Lines from other hymns show the mingled strength and delicacy of her style, the nobility and sweetness of her character, and the genuine value of her religion.

What though in lowly grief I sigh
For friends beloved no longer nigh!
Submissive still would I reply,
"Thy will be done!"

Though thou hast called me to resign
What most I prized, it ne'er was mine;
I have but yielded what was thine;
"Thy will be done!"

Let but my fainting heart be blest
With thy sweet spirit for its guest,
My God, to thee I leave the rest.
"Thy will be done!"

From a song less widely known, one can gather an idea of what the Christian means by the experience he calls prayer:

My God, is any hour so sweet,
From blush of morn to evening star,

As that which calls me to thy feet,
The hour of prayer?

Blest is that tranquil hour of morn,
And blest that solemn hour of eve,
When on the wings of prayer upborne,
The world I leave.

Then is my strength by thee renewed;
Then are my sins by thee forgiven;
Then dost thou cheer my solitude
With hopes of heaven.

No words can tell what sweet relief
Here for my every want I find;
What strength for warfare, balm for grief,
What peace of mind.

Ohio contributes during this period one good hymn to the hymn-book, that of Phoebe Cary, beginning:

One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er.

The peculiarly effective first line of this poem would keep the poem alive even if the other lines were only moderately good. The whole hymn has the breath and color of poetry.

George Washington Doane, who was, like Sears, a graduate of Union College, in New York, and who later became bishop of New Jersey, was the author of one of the favorite evening hymns, "Softly Now

the Light of Day," a graceful lyric, full of gentleness and piety.

Another woman hymn writer of this period, though she is represented in hymn-books generally by but one hymn, stands nevertheless by virtue of that single lyric near to Watts and Wesley. Sarah Flower Adams was born in 1806. She was the daughter of Benjamin Flower, who was editor of the "Cambridge Intelligencer." She married William B. Adams, an eminent engineer, and himself a writer of some note in his day.

The historian and critic of literature must search far to find songs of any kind equal to "Nearer, My God, to Thee"; he will probably not find one superior to it. If there is anything lacking in this hymn to make a perfect song and an adequate expression of true religion, I am unable to say what it is. The hymn-book has made a slight revision in the mode of a verb in the fifth line of the first stanza of the original: "would be" is made to read "shall be." This is a delicate bit of adaptation, yet it is important. The slightly uncertain subjunctive was out of place in a poem of such clarity and power, and it is important to remove even the slightest let or hindrance to the sweeping power of one of the world's greatest songs of religion.

The poem was published in 1841 at the close of an epoch of poetry such as England had not seen since the days of great Elizabeth. In its brief line—as also in the lines of Heber and others—we can see

how the lyric of religion expresses in its own way the mind and spirit of its time; here we see the ardor of the age—its wildly free imagination, its mingled dreams and realities, its impetuous will, its soul of beauty—all reflected in the hymns of its religion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DURING the Victorian era, and more recently both in England and America, have appeared a remarkable number and variety of hymns. Several scores of these the hymn-book seems to have chosen permanently; many others have been chosen, of course, only tentatively. There are a few outstanding ones, like Kipling's "Recessional" and Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," which leave little doubt of their permanence.

In all the huge movement and stir in the last fifty years, there has been much vigorous manifestation of the religious life. It is not surprising that the fifteen years following the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" produced more ringing lyrics of religion than has any period of the same length in English history. There was tremendous agitation and conflict among religious forces. The zeal of the conservative faithful and the ardor of the progressive faithful showed itself in flashes of art as well as in the earnest, long-drawn, and bitter prosaic struggles.

Hymns rich, intense, and luminous sprang from Conservatives and Progressives alike. And it is

strong attestation of the truth and universality of the hymns that even radical Conservatives and radical Progressives were soon—however much or little they were aware of the fact—singing each other's hymns, "teaching and admonishing one another" according to the Scripture in spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. The Fundamentalists and the Liberals of to-day sing the hymns of Whittier and Holmes and Mrs. Adams, together with those of Bonar, Newman, and Bickersteth.

Among the major hymnists of the time is Horatio Bonar, the foremost of the Scottish hymn-writers. He was born in Edinburgh in 1808. Graduated from the University of Edinburgh, he entered the ministry of the Established Church of Scotland, from which he later seceded to become one of the founders, and for the rest of his life a leader, of the Scottish Free Church. He died in 1889. He published many hymns, some translations from the Greek and Latin, but mostly original hymns.

Among his best are "A Few More Years Shall Roll"; "Beyond the Smiling and the Weeping"; "Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord"; "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"; "Here, O My Lord, I Meet Thee Face to Face"; and "Go Labor On, Spend and Be Spent."

Bonar's hymns are sorrowful and plaintive, like autumn winds over Scottish hills. The sadness and transience of life is a recurrent theme.

A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come;

.

A few more storms shall beat
On this wild, rocky shore.

.

Beyond the frost-chain and the fever
I shall be soon;
Beyond the rock-waste and the river,
Beyond the ever and the never
I shall be soon.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;
For toil comes rest, for exile, home;
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight peal, "Behold, I come."

Make haste, O man, to live,
Thy time is almost o'er
O sleep not, dream not, but arise.
The Judge is at the door!

But the somber tone of his hymns is usually lightened by grave consolations and rock-founded hopes. His communion hymn, three stanzas of which are quoted here, is a wistful and heavenly minded song, intensely personal, yet broad enough, it would seem, for Christians of any and all opinions of that sacrament:

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load;
Here taste afresh the calm of sins forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with thee.

I have no help but thine, nor do I need
Another arm save thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
My strength is in thy might, thy might alone.

One of the best hymns of the nineteenth century is that of W. Walsham Howe (1823–97), Bishop of Wakefield, "For All Thy Saints Who from Their Labors Rest." Others of his hymns are "We Give Thee But Thine Own"; "O Word of God Incarnate"; and "O Jesus, Thou Art Standing."

The version of the twenty-third Psalm that the hymn-book has pronounced most nearly adequate is that of the Rev. Sir Henry Williams Baker, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." It is not so good poetry as the twenty-third Psalm in the Authorized version of the Bible. Take, for example:

He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul.

Though the Psalm lines do not rime and are not measured, they express the thought as do no other grouping of words.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

This is good verse, but it is not the unalloyed poetic gold of the "prose" line.

Baker's style is simple and pleasing, and his hymns have a ring of honesty in them all. He contributed thirty-three hymns to "Hymns Ancient and Modern" and four hymn tunes. He edited two other books of hymns, and, as chairman of the original board of directors of that greatest of English hymn-books, he exerted a wide influence. He was born in 1821, and died in 1877. This foremost hymnologist of the period was, like John Mason Neale, a Cambridge University man. His famous paraphrase was published in 1868:

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever.

.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulders gently laid
And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me,

Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

And so through all the length of days,
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house forever.

"For the Beauty of the Earth" was written by John Pierpont, a Unitarian minister who lived in Troy, New York. He was a graduate of Yale. He wrote some fifteen hymns, which maintain a good level of excellence. His "Hymn of the Last Supper" has marked qualities of simplicity, harmony, and devotion. But one sees that it is not strictly a hymn; it is rather a narrative than an expression of praise or petition. It is quoted here as an example of a good poem written expressly as a hymn, yet not a hymn at all:

The winds are hushed, and a peaceful moon
Looks down on Zion's hill;
The city sleeps, 't is night's calm noon,
And all the streets are still,

Save when along the shaded walks,
We hear the watchman's call,
Or the guard's footsteps as he stalks
In moonlight on the wall.

How soft, how holy is this light!
And hark, a mournful song,
As gentle as these dews of night
Floats on the air along.

Affection's wish, devotion's prayer,
Are in the holy strain;
'T is resignation, nor despair,
'T is triumph, though 't is pain.

'T is Jesus and his faithful few
That pour that hymn of love;
O God, may we that song renew
Around that board above.

The repetition of "'t is" and "that" in the last six lines are small defects of technique that would mar the hymn's success even though it were otherwise good. But if this is not a good hymn, how is it that William B. Tappan's somewhat similarly narrative and descriptive poem has been a favorite hymn for a hundred years since it was published?

'T is midnight, and on Olive's brow
The star is dimmed that lately shone;
'T is midnight, in the garden now
The suffering Saviour prays alone.

'T is midnight, and from all removed,
Emmanuel wrestles long with fears;
E'en that disciple whom he loved
Heeds not his master's grief and tears.

'T is midnight, and for others' guilt
The Man of sorrows weeps in blood;
Yet he that hath in anguish knelt
Is not forsaken by his God.

'T is midnight, and from ether-plains
Is borne the song that angels know;
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Saviour's woe.

This poem is so vivid and tense with feeling that it begins to sing itself. Both in mood and form it is more purely lyric than the other. It has no such abstract phrases as "affection's wish" and "devotion's prayer." The second stanza of the first poem is vivid. But the stalk of the guard, and the moonlight on the wall, draw attention, inartistically, away from the center of the picture. There is no detail in the second poem which is not an undertone, and which does not set the central figure in higher light.

Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–97), of "The Golden Treasury" and also of "The Golden Treasury of Sacred Song," was himself the author of a volume of hymns. Three of these are in common use: "Thou Sayest, Take Up Thy Cross"; "O Light of Life, O Saviour Dear"; and "O Thou Not Made with Hands." He wrote another remarkable religious lyric, one which is almost a great hymn. The style of this song recalls Burne-Jones and the Rossettis. But allowing all the beauty and all the religious value of the poem, one still feels that it is too fragile for a popular hymn; the figure, moreover, is drawn out till it is tenuous; the eighth line, beautiful as it is, is too subtle; and the third stanza is too naïvely didactic.

Christ in his heavenly garden walks all day
And calls to souls upon the world's highway;
Wearied with trifles, maimed and sick with sin,
Christ by the gate stands and invites them in.

"How long, unwise, will ye pursue your woe?
Here from the throne sweet waters ever go;
Here the white lilies shine like stars above;
Here in the red rose burns the face of Love.

" 'T is not from earthly paths I bid you flee,
But lighter in my ways your feet will be;
'T is not to summon you from human mirth,
But add a depth and sweetness not of earth.

"Still by the gate I stand as on ye stray;
Turn your steps hither, am I not the Way?
The sun is falling fast, the night is nigh;
Why will ye wander, wherefore will ye die?"

John Ellerton, who was born in London in 1828, wrote a large number of hymns, several of which are widely sung. The most familiar and perhaps the best is "Saviour, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise." Henry Twells, Canon of Peterborough Cathedral, wrote in 1868 the hymn beginning:

At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around thee lay;
O in what divers pain they met,
O with what joy they went away!

John S. B. Monsell, a graduate of Dublin University and clergyman of the Church of England, was the

author of the militant hymn, "Fight the Good Fight." Another militant song of religion is that of Sabine Baring-Gould, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," published in 1865, and married to the splendid processional music of Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1871. The song makes a notable claim as to the power of hymnody:

Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise.

With these two hymns may be mentioned that of Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, "Forward Be Our Watchword."

A hymn by A. C. Benson may be mentioned in connection with the foregoing. It rather discounts the type of war heroism and speaks of higher heroism, of "scorned delights" and "lavished lives"—lavished in service rather than in destruction, and it looks for

The far-off victories of love.

William E. Gladstone, Thomas Hughes, W. B. Trevelyan, and Charles Kingsley were all contributors to the hymn-book at this time. The hymn of Kingsley, "From Thee All Skill and Science Flow," is by the verdict of the hymn-book the best of those written by this group.

Of the American hymnists of the middle of the century and later there was a notable group of Harvard men, most of whom were Unitarians. Among them were Holmes, Lowell, Henry and Samuel Longfellow, Samuel Johnson, and Theodore Parker.

One of Holmes's best hymns, to which he gave the title "Trust," may be quoted:

O love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while thou are near.

Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts are whispering, Thou art near!

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
Shall softly tell us, Thou art near!

On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O love divine, forever dear;
Content to suffer while we know
Living and dying thou art near!

William Cullen Bryant wrote the hymn of which the first two stanzas are:

O North with all thy vales of green,
O South with all thy palms,
From peopled towns and vales between,
Uplift the voice of psalms;
Raise, ancient East, the anthem high,
And let the youthful West reply.

Lo in the clouds of heaven appears
God's well beloved Son;
He brings a train of brighter years,
His kingdom is begun.
He comes a guilty world to bless
With mercy, truth, and righteousness.

It may be that the first stanza of this poem was originally conceived as a plea for reconciliation between the North and South; it was published in 1869.

One of the best of all the American hymns is that of Samuel J. Stone, "The Church's One Foundation," published in 1868. This poem has the strength, the simplicity, the dignity, the vividness, and the religious fervor that characterize every great hymn. One other hymn by this author may be justly called great:

Weary of earth, and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven, and long to enter in;
But there no evil thing may find a home;
And yet I hear a voice that bids me, "Come."

So vile am I, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of the holy land?
Before the whiteness of the throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

.

"Christ to the Young Man Said, 'Yet One Thing More,'" was written by Henry W. Longfellow as a hymn to be sung at the ordination of his brother,

Samuel Longfellow, to the Unitarian ministry. This is the only hymn, strictly speaking, that he wrote, though a number of his poems were included in the hymn-books of forty years ago.

Samuel Longfellow wrote many hymns. He is represented in the various books to-day by from two to seventeen hymns. "O Still in Accents Sweet and Strong" and "I Look to Thee in Every Need" are generally included. "O God, Thy Children Gathered Here" he wrote for the ordination of Edward Everett Hale to the Unitarian ministry. Samuel Longfellow, with Samuel Johnson of Boston, edited three successive hymn-books. The last and largest volume, "Hymns of the Spirit," was published in 1864. Johnson's hymn, which is in virtually all of the present-day books, "City of God, How Broad and Fair," closes with this stalwart verse:

> In vain the surge's angry shock,
> In vain the drifting sands;
> Unharmed upon the eternal Rock,
> The eternal city stands.

A younger member of this group, and as a hymnist one of the foremost, is still living, the Rev. Frederick L. Hosmer. He, with Dr. William C. Gannett, author of "Praise to God and Thanks We Bring," is joint author of two volumes of religious lyrical poetry. The number of his hymns in various books ranges from three to thirty-five. "The English Hymnal" contains three. His "Father, to Thee We

Look in All Our Sorrow," "Forward through the Ages," and "O Beautiful My Country" are among his best.

One of the best American hymnists is the New England Quaker, Whittier. The hymns of Whittier are in general accord with the other hymns of the time, and are fairly typical of the hymnody of the latter half of the century. It was during the decade of 1850–60 and shortly following that he wrote his best religious lyrical verse. His hymns, like the other good ones of the time, show signs of the battle between Science and Religion, as the opposing sides termed themselves. Whittier enters the field from the camp of Religion, but not to fight Science. Unlike Newman and "Little Bethel," or Huxley and Darwin, he did not accept one value and even pretend to close his eyes to the other. With plenty of human doubt and misgiving, he yet had a faith so deeply based that he had nothing but welcome for whatever truth Science or any other agency might bring forth.

The hymn of Whittier's which the hymn-books seem to agree upon as the best is taken from his "Brewing of Soma." Beginning with the description of a wild Vedic religious rite, this poem goes on:

> The morning twilight of the race
> Down sends their native psalms
> And still with wondering eyes we trace
> The simple prayers of Soma's race
> That Vedic verse embalms.

As in that child-world's early year,
Each after year has striven
By music, incense, vigils drear,
And trance, to bring the stars more near,
Or lift men up to heaven.

Some fever of the blood and brain,
Some self-exalting spell,
The scourger's keen delight of pain,
The dervish dance, the Orphic strain,
The wild-haired Bacchant's yell,—

The desert's half grown hermit, sunk
The saner brute below;
The naked Santon, Hashish-drunk,
The cloister-madness of the monk,
The fakir's torture show!

And yet the past comes round again,
And new doth old fulfil;
In sensuous transports, wild as vain,
We brew in many a Christian fane
The heathen Soma still.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like those who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,

Let us like them without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest of Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee,
The silence of eternity.
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of thy call,
As noiseless let thy blessing fall
As fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heat of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
O, still, small voice of calm!

This poem furnishes some illustration to the study of the nature of the Christian hymn. It is a religious poem part of which is quite unhymnal and part of which constitutes one of the supreme hymns of the language. And there is not a shadow of doubt as to the line where the poem ceases to be one kind,

and becomes clearly and entirely the other kind, of lyric. With the line,

> The heathen Soma still,

a poetical thunder-storm suddenly ceases, and the poem passes into lyric sunshine:

> Dear Lord and Father of mankind.

The hymnal part of the poem is treasured in the memory of myriads of people; the other part is nearly forgotten.

There is no reason to say that when Whittier wrote these particular stanzas he had any idea of their being set to music and put into hymn-books. "A good hymn," he once said, "is the best use to which poetry can be devoted, and I do not claim that I have succeeded in composing one."

The Friends were not given to hymn-singing. As he says in his poem, "Worship,"

> To worship rightly is to love each other,
> Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

But he caught the hymn inspiration here, and though he was very likely not aware of it, the poem at a certain point catches step and marches in the noble company of the world's great hymns.

He was afraid of narrowness and spite; not of any new revelation that science might give, nor of the old truth that religion might assert. He was severe toward scientific as well as religious bigotry.

In "The Quest" he says, "The riddle of the world is understood only by him who feels that God is good as only he can feel who makes his love the ladder of his faith." In "Our Master," written in 1863, is the following stanza typical of Whittier, and reflecting something of the times:

> Not thine the bigot's partial plea,
> Nor thine the zealot's ban;
> Thou well canst spare a love of thee
> That ends in hate of man.

From the stanzas of the poem the hymn-books have made two hymns, "Immortal Love Forever Full" and "We May Not Climb the Heavenly Steep." His longer poem, "The Eternal Goodness," 1863, furnishes several splendid hymns to various books. Stanzas from it are:

> I walk with bare, hushed feet, the ground
> Ye tread with boldness shod;
> I dare not fix with mete and bound
> The love and power of God.
>
> Yet in the maddening maze of things,
> And tossed by storm and flood;
> To one fixed hope my spirit clings;
> I know that God is good.
>
> I know not where his islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air,
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond his love and care.

Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote one of the most beautiful hymns in celebration of Christmas:

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark street shineth
The everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

One of the most spirited of all hymns, a lyric that has something of the militant zeal of the ancient song of Deborah, is Julia Ward Howe's song of the Civil War:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword.
His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence in the dim and flaring lamps.
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel;
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal.

Let the hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

For its fire of poetic inspiration, its triumphant faith in God and in the future of humanity, and for its vivid beauty, there are few hymns to match it. This hymn is not in the English hymn-books. One reason for the omission is that the original title, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," might imply it to be exclusively an American hymn. Yet some of the best American books omit it. It may be that its martial images seem to them too vivid to be interpreted as of spiritual warfare only.

"Eternal Ruler of the Ceaseless Round" was written by John W. Chadwick in 1864. He was a Unitarian minister of Brooklyn, New York:

Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way;
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day,
Rule in our hearts, that we may ever be
Guided and strengthened and upheld by thee.

We would be one in hatred of all wrong,
One in our love of all things sweet and fair,
One with the joy that breaketh into song,
One with the grief that trembles into prayer,
One in the power that makes thy children free
To follow truth and thus to follow thee.

These lines of peace and good will are especially significant as coming at a time so full of hate and slaughter.

Adelaide Proctor was the author of a number of good hymns; the best is probably the one beginning:

My God, I thank thee, who hast made
The earth so bright,
So full of splendor and of joy,
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here
Noble and right.

Adelaide Proctor was a Roman Catholic. She was a musician and poet, the daughter of Barry Cornwall.

A hymn by Elizabeth Clephane stands out clearly both for its devotion and its poetry. The stanza following illustrates the place of nature in hymnal poetry to express and to stir devotion:

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.

A stanza from a hymn by John Ellerton suggests the hope of religion in helping to master the new complexities of life:

Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,
The wealth of land and sea;
The world of science and of art,
Revealed and ruled by thee.

Mary Lathbury's simple hymn of two stanzas, "Break Thou the Bread of Life," is a masterpiece of hymnody. The familiar hymns of Frances R. Havergal and of Mary Ann Thompson are likely to live and do good for a long time.

One must not neglect to mention the Christmas hymn of J. G. Holland, "There 's a Song in the Air," and the strong hymn of John Hay, "Defend Us, Lord, from Every Ill," and that of Washington Gladden, "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee."

Samuel Dryden Phelps (1816–95), a Baptist divine of New Haven, Connecticut, was the author of a hymn of great strength and tenderness, "Saviour, Thy Dying Love."

Sidney Lanier's exquisite "Ballad of Trees and the Master" has been included in several of the later hymn-books.

Fanny J. Van Alstyne Crosby (1820–1915) has exerted a tremendous sway through her hymns of sweet and kindly sentiment and of rapt devotion. The wide success of her scores of hymns is due in part to the sentimental appeal of their tunes as well as of their words; it is also in part due to their folk-song clearness and easy rhythmic swing. But it is due in a larger part to their humble piety, as naïve and full of wonders and self-searchings as that of some poetical saint of the early church.

"Work for the Night is Coming" was written by Anna Walker Coghill, who was born in England in 1836; "More Love to Thee, O Christ" was written by Elizabeth Prentiss of Portland, Maine; "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," by William Whiting (1825–78), master of the Winchester Choristers' School; "I Love to Tell the Story" and "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" are by Katherine Hankey, who was born in 1846. The latter song is a cento from her "Life of Christ" in verse.

The hymns of the last two decades of the nineteenth century are not, so far, numerous in the hymn-book. The following stanzas of a hymn by Arthur C. Ainger seems to be typical of the better hymns of the last years of the century:

From utmost East to utmost West,
Where'er man's foot has trod,
By the mouth of many messengers
Goes forth the word of God;
Give ear to me, ye continents,
Ye isles, give ear to me;
The earth shall be filled with the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God,
With the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth
May shine throughout the world:
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin
To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.

There is in these lines a hopefulness for better days in the world generally. Their outlook is world-wide; they stress the call of Christianity for justice and harmony in international relations. The people who sing such songs as this are quite abandoned hypocrites if their votes do not begin to register some of the sentiments they sing so lustily. This hymn of Ainger's is not a plea for narrow ecclesiastical advantage, but rather for a broad enlightenment, justice, and charity.

The hymn of Rudyard Kipling written for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 is representative of the new sort of hymnody. It has taken its place in most of the good hymnals. Such an early and general acceptance shows that it has caught the ear and struck the right chord, at least for the present generation. Whether it will hold a high place with "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Lead, Kindly Light," of course no one can tell. It seems to answer the demands of good hymnody. It moves off in a grand sweeping first line that sounds like Milton, or, in a smaller field, like Watts at his best. Its phrases have a sounding smoothness that gratifies the ear, fills up the voice, and lingers in the memory. Its images are vivid, clear-cut, readily apparent. Its thought moves swiftly and directly forward. And it is alive with the spirit of religion.

Although the hymn is written in the language of modern life, it is full of biblical solemnities of diction and luxuriance of figure. This combination of

military and biblical tone is not artificial. The poet's life, one remembers, is saturated with the spirit of the British army and navy; and, on the other hand, both of his grandfathers were Methodist preachers. For the biblical influence, notice for example the lines:

> The tumult and the shouting dies,
> The captains and the kings depart.

In Job 36:25 we find this phrase:

> The thunder of the captains and the shouting.

It is interesting to notice the same idea and words in Lowell's "Commemoration Ode":

> Great captains, with their guns and drums,
> Disturb our judgment for an hour,
> But at last silence comes;
> Then all are gone.

The lines,

> Beneath whose awful hand we hold
> Dominion over palm and pine,

as well as these from Emerson's "Wood Notes,"

> And grant to dwellers with the pine
> Dominion o'er the palm and vine,

may be reminiscent of the sixth verse of the eighth Psalm:

> Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet.

Kipling's "Recessional" may be based partly on the nineteenth Psalm. Watts's hymn, a direct paraphrase, begins,

O God, our help in ages past;

Kipling's,

God of our fathers, known of old;

the Psalm,

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Let us compare further the two hymns with another part of the psalm carrying the same idea:

The shouting and the tumult dies,
The captains and the kings depart.

.

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all her sons away;
They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which grow-

eth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

The hymn-book is of course based on the Bible. It would be an easy but endless task to show the direct and indirect dependence of the hymns upon Scripture texts. Watts's and Kipling's hymns are cited as typical.

This recessional hymn would seem to be a major song of the race by yet another test, that of almost universal applicability. It holds, as 't were, the mirror up to nature—individually and internationally—so as to be startling to those who look intently at it.

Here is a later hymn, published by John Oxenham in 1915:

Lord, God of hosts, whose mighty hand
Dominion holds on sea and land,
In peace and war thy will we see
Shaping the larger liberty.
Nations may rise and nations fall,
Thy changeless purpose rules o'er all.

For those who weak and broken lie
In weariness and agony,
Great healer, in their beds of pain,
Come, touch and make them whole again.
O, hear a people's prayer and bless
Thy servants in their hour of stress.

For those to whom the call shall come
We pray thy tender welcome home;

The toil, the bitterness all past,
We trust them to thy love at last,
O, hear a people's prayer for all
Who nobly striving nobly fall!

For those who minister and heal
And spend themselves, their skill, their zeal;
Renew their hearts with Christ-like faith
And guard them from disease and death.
And in thine own good time, Lord, send
Thy peace on earth till time shall end.

This hymn evidently arose in the midst of war. We may place this hymn beside Kipling's or one of Watts's or Wesley's and see a good hymn in comparison with great ones.

The following stanza is from a hymn, "Our Father, Thy Dear Name Doth Show"; it seems to have the modern spirit:

Bring in, we pray, the glorious day,
When battle-cries are stilled;
When bitter strife is swept away,
And hearts with love are filled.
O help us banish pride and wrong
Which, since the world began,
Have marred its peace; help us make strong
The brotherhood of man.

Perhaps the most widely accepted hymn written since the opening of this century is a hymn by the Rev. Frank Mason North. It is a hymnic cry out of the travail and misery of the modern city.

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man!

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for thee
Still holds the freshness of thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of thy face.

O Master, from the mountain-side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain,
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again.

Till sons of men shall learn thy love
And follow where thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from thy heaven above
Shall come the city of our God.

There is a growing interest in hymn-singing and in the hymn itself as poetry. There are still tawdry hymns with silly music printed by the car-load and taught to children who will grow up rather

ashamed that they know them. But the good hymns of faith still go on. There are doubtless hymns of integrity and power being written now. Glancing through the indexes of authors in recent hymn-books, one finds such names as Canon Ainger, Felix Adler, the Duke of Argyll, Robert Bridges, G. K. Chesterton, Henry Sloane Coffin, Havelock Ellis, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Van Dyke, and Israel Zangwill. From the hymns written to-day, there may be gathered some lasting world-hymns.

CHAPTER IX

THE IMPORT OF THE HYMN-BOOK

AS mankind's most ancient and most beloved kind of poetry, the hymn is characterized by depth of thought, by patent serviceableness, and by lasting beauty. Any kind of art, any form of expression whatever, to be perenially fresh and dear to men must be at once profound, relevant, and comely. The constant returning of generation after generation to the hymnal as to Jacob's well attests the depth and soundness and beauty of it. The hymn-book is a lasting popular Outline of Life, a lyric handbook of philosophy, ethics, and spiritual beauty.

The hymn-book contains a system of philosophy; short and simple as these lyrics are, they have given to innumerable minds a satisfying answer to the question of the source, the nature, and the end of all things. They assert that the origin and support of all life is eternal God, infinitely knowing, just, and kind. The hymn-book teaches a system of ethics; it asserts that man can know, and ought to do, the will of God. The hymn-book teaches a system of esthetics; it asserts that life finds its perfect bloom of beauty and its crown of happiness only in accord with the nature and will of God.

The wise and the prudent may make pause at the

hymn's simple and audaciously confident assertions as to the great mysteries that baffle all the faculties of reason; yet the more wise and prudent hold that poets and prophets can, by the power of chastened imagination, faith, inspiration, go surely beyond the common faculties of reason, experiencing, as Wordsworth says,

> a blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,
> Is lightened;

and they "see into the soul of things."

The hymn-book bases its system upon manifold and powerful authority. The hymns, being the thought of strong and deeply experienced souls, kindled into song, claim (1) the regal authority of Poetry. Having a sweeping acceptance by all sorts and conditions of men of religion, they claim (2) the authority of democratic election. Being the choric voice of organized religion speaking out of its ages of experience and out of its present life, they claim the authority of (3) the church catholic. Being, much of it, paraphrase of the Psalms and all of it in accord with the Bible, the hymnal claims (4) the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Further, says Charles Wesley's hymn,

> A thousand oracles divine
> Their common beams unite.

The hymns, then, speak of the origin of all things in terms of certain knowledge. A hymn by John Sterling published in 1840 begins with these lines:

O Source divine, and Life of all,
The fount of being's wondrous sea,
Thy depth would every heart appall
That saw not love supreme in thee.

A hymn by Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks in simple words of the great mystery:

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames in sun and star;
Center and source of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

The Hebrew psalm, turned into English numbers by Isaac Watts, thus asserts the eternity of all-ruling Deity:

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Another hymn by Watts asserts the eternal supremacy of God—the primary hymnal theme:

Thy throne eternal ages stood,
Ere seas or stars were made.

.

Eternity with all its years
Stands present in thy view;

To thee there 's nothing old appears,
Great God, there 's nothing new.

Many of the hymns speak of this inward assurance of God being corroborated by the testimony of external nature, especially in the grander aspects such as sunrise, storms, mountains, and the sky at night. Again to quote Watts, who is speaking evidently from his own emotions as well as from the artistic and spiritual tradition of the Psalms:

Those mighty orbs proclaim thy power;
Their motions speak thy skill;
And on the wings of every hour
We read thy patience still.

Lines such as the following gleaned from the hymn-book carry on the same idea, creation declaring the Creator:

Thou who has sown the sky with stars, setting thy thoughts in gold—
The very dust inbreathed by thee, the clods all cold and dead,
Wake into beauty and to life, to give thy children bread.
Burton.

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awakening cries.
Caswall, from the German.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers—
The Eighth Psalm.

He plants his footsteps in the sea,
He rides upon the storm.

Cowper.

And bright is his path on the wings of the storm.

Grant.

Addison's familiar and ornate lines repeat the ancient inspired idea, "The heavens declare the glory of God":

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
The spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

Lines from Sir Robert Grant's hymn, "O, Worship the King," spring evidently from a contemplation of the sky:

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light.

The hymns declare that human beings may have sure apprehension of the infinite spirit, and communion with it:

His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.

Watts.

An American hymn by Frederick L. Hosmer asserts the reality of human acquaintanceship with the personality of God:

> O thou in all thy might so far,
> In all thy love so near,
> Beyond the range of sun and star,
> And yet beside us here:
>
> What heart can comprehend thy name;
> Or searching find thee out,
> Who art within a quickening flame,
> A Presence round about?

Two lyrical statements of this basic idea in the Bible, one in the Old Testament, one in the New, are unsurpassed in grandeur of conception and splendor of expression; they are true hymns, though as yet there is no adequate metrical version in English. Perhaps there will never be. The passages state in ultimate words the idea of the immanence and permanence of Deity:

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in the grave, behold thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

The passage from the New Testament, part of a letter of St. Paul to the Romans, is an outburst of song:

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is no wonder that jail-doors would not hold in front of a man who could write songs like this in his letters and sing them in jail at night; even the

Gates of hell shall never,

as Baring-Gould's hymn says, be able to hold before such songs and souls.

The philosophy, the deep and steadfast belief, of these two ancient hymns is that of the modern hymn-book. Its lyrical great argument is to

assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

The God of Abraham praise,
Who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of everlasting days,
And God of love.

Thomas Olivers.

For light and love, for rest and food,
For daily help and nightly care,
Sing to the Lord for he is good,
And praise his name, for it is fair.

Crown him the Lord of years,
The Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres,
Ineffably sublime.

Matthew Bridges.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Heber.

Sun, moon and stars fulfill
Their time by thee;
Angels to do thy will
Fleet lightnings be;
Rain, hail, and frost and snow,
And all the winds that blow
Are at thy nod;
Oceans and tempests know
Their mighty God.

His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim,

He knows the way he taketh,
And I will walk with him.

Anna L. Waring.

Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Comes the sweet consciousness, I am with thee.

Harriet Beecher Stowe.

But the hymns, with all their brave certainty about the order and direction of the universe, make no claim to have sounded all its depths; they know for sure, but they do not know all. To quote again from Matthew Bridges's hymn:

No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright.

Another hymn thus expresses the idea of the smallness of man's highest conception before the reality:

I cannot find thee, e'en when most adoring;
Before thy throne I bend in lowliest prayer;
Beyond these bounds of thought, my thought upsoaring,
From farthest quest comes back; thou art not there.

Yet high above the limits of my seeing,
And folded far within the inmost heart,
And deep below the depths of conscious being,
The splendor shineth; there, O God, thou art.

Stowe.

Whittier in his "Eternal Goodness" has this stanza about the smallness and yet the certainty of man's knowledge:

> I know not what the future hath
> Of marvel or surprise;
> I only know that life and death
> His mercy underlies.

We know, says the hymn, that unlimited Good is above and beyond the visible world wherein we see His power. The hymn-book is not pantheistic, if pantheism is identifying the Absolute merely with creation.

> Thy voice produced the seas and spheres,
> Bade the waves roar, the planets shine;
> But nothing like thyself appears
> Through all these spacious works of thine.
>
> Who can behold the blazing light?
> Who can approach consuming flame?
> None but thy Wisdom knows thy might;
> None but thy Word can speak thy name.

The last two lines of this hymn by Watts touch on the mystery of the Trinity: Divinity can be apprehended only by means of Divinity—the eternal wisdom, proceeding from God into human mind, perceives the true incarnate Word. A hymn by Samuel Wesley, father of John and Charles Wesley, shows the same process of thought:

Hail, Father, whose creating call
Unnumbered worlds attend;
Who art in all, and over all,
Thyself both source and end,

.

Not quite displayed to worlds above,
Nor quite on earth concealed,
By wondrous unexhausted Love
To mortal man revealed.

The same humility but surety of faith is seen in Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light," and likewise in a hymn of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, which is not so well known as it may be:

No human eye thy face may see,
No human thought thy form may know;
But all creation dwells in thee,
And thy great life through all doth flow.

And yet, O strange and wondrous thought!
Thou art a God who hearest prayer;
And every heart with sorrow fraught,
To seek thy present aid may dare.

The modern hymnal statement of its philosophy, its thought about the order and direction of the universe, is briefly and simply stated, but unshakably certain:

In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,

For nothing changes here.
The storms may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

Anna L. Waring.

The King of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine forever.

Baker.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'er flow.

Stennett.

Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,
Ever near the pilgrim's side;
Gently lead us by the hand,
Pilgrims in a desert land.

Wells.

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in his wings.

Cowper.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

Newton.

In simple trust like those who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.

Whittier.

Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.

Wesley.

These passages are illustrative of the hymn-book's affirmation concerning God and concerning man's approach to Him. It teaches that God is infinite in being, wisdom, love, and power. The book teaches further that the Infinite has shown His nature and will to this world in the person of Jesus Christ; that the Logos, Idea, Spirit, Word, which was in the beginning and without which was not anything made that was made, became flesh and dwelt among us, the Infinite became finite and visible, drawing man out of darkness, revealing the way of life, and showing that the universe is ordered by wisdom and love. And the hymn-book teaches further that infinite God revealed historically in the Son is yet ever-present Spirit, and that God is one. This constitutes the basic proposition of the hymnal philosophy.

Then follows naturally a consideration of man—*What is man that thou art mindful of him?*—and of his duty and his destiny.

Concerning the nature of man, the hymn-book holds that he is dust of the earth, plus the breath of God:

His sovereign power without our aid,
Made us of clay and formed us men.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail.

All valiant dust that builds on dust.

His sovereign powers our bodies made,
Our souls are his immortal breath.

The soul of man, Jehovah's breath.

Some of the old hymns call man worm in the dust; Darwin trailed him lower yet than the worm, to the germ—racially, that is, as elementary science traces him there individually; but the hymn-book, with Genesis, takes him, as we see, on down to inorganic dust itself.

Thus, then, is summarized the hymn-book's philosophy concerning the origin and nature of man: Dust indeed he is, yet also breath of God; and it is the purpose of his life that the creature shall rise more and more out of the dust and become the child and friend of God. This is the duty and destiny of man.

Higher and yet higher,
Out of clouds and night;
Nearer and nearer,
Rising to the light.

Anonymous.

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

Wesley.

What is my being but for thee,
Its sure support, its noblest end,
Thy ever smiling face to see
And serve the cause of such a friend?

Watts.

The duty of man, declares the hymn-book, is to attain to God. This carries measureless implications of God-likeness in his being and behavior—the best use of all his faculties at their best; the exercise of perfect justice and mercy, for as man becomes more a son of God he becomes more a brother of man. The duty of man is then to climb upward to God. And the hymns say that there is one true Way.

But man is free to choose his way. He is made so much in the image of God that he has the power of shaping life according to his own will. The sun, says William Wordsworth's hymn,

can not halt or go astray,
But our eternal spirits may.

Being thus free, man does not have to rise. He can choose to go away from, rather than toward, the ultimate Good. And this is sin; sin is more than man's imperfection and his lowness in the scale.

It is willing and doing contrary to the perfect will of God. And with sin is darkness and sorrow, hell, discord with God, and the stony necessity of repentance and redemption.

Here, then, is the hymn-book's system of ethics, its consideration of the duty of free man, his struggle with adversity, his defeat of hell, and his attainment of heaven. The hymns speak with searching wisdom and deep appeal about the long journey that man must travel, and the true way.

Of the future of man the hymn-book makes comprehensive and most steadfast affirmation. It affirms that the human race, under God, has shining days before it, and a prosperous journey. Before the hymns have done with this dust-creature man, they have advanced him to the state of a flaming seraph, crowned and, beyond all telling, free and glorious. But it is a strugglesome way.

We say that the hymnal is a lyric handbook of practical living, if it is a book of glorious dreams. Life is short, says one of Wesley's hymns:

> Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
> 'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand.

And man must be on his long way. Doddridge, following St. Paul, finds great zest in life—"as a strong man, to run a race":

> Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
> And press with vigor on;
> A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
> And an immortal crown.

A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey;
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way.

But life, sings Toplady, is not all haste and urgency; duty may lead through peace as well as turmoil:

If on a quiet sea
Toward heaven we calmly sail,
With faithful hearts, O God, to thee
We 'll own the favoring gale.

But should the surges rise,
And rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm,
Which drives us nearer home.

Sorrow and toil are part of the uphill journey, but even that may have its element of joy:

Deem not that they are blest alone,
Whose days a peaceful tenor keep;
The anointed Son of God makes known
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

Nor let the good man's trust depart
Though life its common gifts deny.

.

For God has marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear;

And heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all his children suffer here.

Bryant.

Oliver Wendell Holmes believes it:

Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near!

Isaac Watts sings out, as only Watts can express such ideas:

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
Or sailed through bloody seas?

No, I must fight if I should win,
Increase my courage, Lord!

The sturdy hymn of faith, "How Firm a Foundation," has this stanza:

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply,
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

One of Bonar's hymns begins:

Go, labor on, spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will.

The best lyrics of the hymn-book, and the favorite ones, are those expressive of human insufficiency and loneliness. They are much more than intellectual realization of the fact; they are cries of longing for fellowship with God.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.

Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near;
O may no earth-born clouds arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.

"Abide with Me" expresses the same insufficiency and peril of life, and longing for completeness and solid standing:

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I cannot die.

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone.

"Nearer, My God, to Thee" condenses in a stanza the gist of the hymn-book's whole theory of life and its meaning and end:

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven:
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given:
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Now, when souls have found that fellowship, they desire to share it; this indeed is the final test of whether they have found it. A hymn by John Chadwick (1840–1904) is a good summary of this idea:

Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way,
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day,
Rule in our hearts that we may ever be
Guided and strengthened and upheld by thee.

We are of thee, the children of thy love,
The brothers of thy well-beloved Son;
Descend, O holy Spirit, like a dove
Into our hearts that we may be as one,
As one with thee to whom we ever trend,
As one with him, our Brother and our Friend.

We would be one in hatred of all wrong,
One in our love of all things good and fair,
One with the joy that breaketh into song,
One with the grief that trembles into prayer,
One in the power that makes thy children free
To follow truth, and thus to follow thee.

O clothe us with thy heavenly armor, Lord—
Thy trusty shield, thy sword of love divine:
Our inspiration be thy constant word;
We ask no victories that are not thine:
Give or withhold, let pain or pleasure be,
Enough to know that we are serving thee.

The city of God, says a hymn by Palgrave—of "The Golden Treasury"—is

Where'er the gentle heart
Finds courage from above,
Where'er the heart forsook
Warms with the breath of love,
Where faith bids fear depart,
City of God, thou art.

Where in life's common ways,
With cheerful feet we go,
Where in his steps we tread
Who trod the way of woe,
Where he is in the heart,
City of God, thou art.

One of the most familiar of modern hymns, Bishop Heber's "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," this figures human duty and its fulfilment:

They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

.

Waft, waft, ye wings, his story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole.

Favorite among the hymns are those of mutual encouragement and exhortation, such as "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "Christian, Dost Thou See Them?" and "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

The passion of the hymn-book for world-wide enlightenment and justice and peace is vividly expressed in some of the best hymns. Especially have some of the more recent hymns stressed social responsibility as a direct method of forwarding the purpose of creation. They expect the world to be less and less a wilderness of woe; they expect crooked paths to be made straight for the children of men, and deserts to blossom as the rose. This will all come with growing Christian enlightenment and practice.

'Mid the homes of want and woe,
Strangers to the living word,
Let the Saviour's heralds go,
Let the voice of hope be heard.

To the weary and the worn
Tell the realm where sorrows cease;
To the outcast and forlorn
Speak of mercy and of peace.

Guard the helpless, seek the strayed,
Comfort trouble, banish grief,
In the might of God arrayed,
Scatter sin and unbelief.

Bishop Howe.

One notices the ring of militant evangelism in these hymns:

O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling.

.

Behold how many thousands still are lying
Bound in the darksome prison-house of sin.

.

Proclaim to every people, tongue and nation
That God in whom they live and move is Love.

.

Give thy sons to bear the message glorious;
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;
Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious.

.

When people sing such zealous ideas as these, they may bring surprising things to pass. This zeal brings to mind such traveling souls as Livingstone, John Wesley, Roger Williams, the French priests among our West and Northwest wilds, St. Augustine in England, and St. Paul himself smiling over the catalogue of his missionary hardships.

Isaac Watts, looking ahead from the end of the seventeenth century, is confident as to the influences of such evangels:

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns;
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Alexander Pope, Roman Catholic contemporary of non-conforming Watts, writes with equal conviction and splendor:

Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes.

* * * * * * * *

See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend.

William Cullen Bryant writes out of the spirit of Puritan New England:

Send forth thy heralds, Lord, to call
The thoughtless with the hardened old,
A wandering flock, to bring them all
To the Good Shepherd's peaceful fold.

And Samuel Longfellow:

O still in accents strong and sweet
Sounds forth the ancient word,
More reapers for the harvest field,
More laborers for the Lord.

The hymnal Utopia, an ideal city, built to music, to deep harmonies of grace and truth, is much spoken of, and it is imaged forth in great light and splendor. There is a spiritual city, not built with hands, invisible in the heavens; and there is to be also on the earth a state built after the celestial likeness—the Kingdom of Heaven, the City of God.

To attain this city is the purpose of man's journey that he calls life. Individuals may be citizens of the kingdom, enriched with its privileges and delights long before the human race in general shall come to it; at the same time the hymns see the whole world moving toward it. Hymns new and old announce the coming kingdom and the City of God.

All the world shall come to serve thee,
And bless thy glorious name;
And thy righteousness triumphant
The island shall proclaim.

Israel Zangwill, translated from the Hebrew. "Union Hymnal."

Older sages saw it dimly,
And their joy to madness wrought;
Living men have gazed upon it,
Standing on the hills of thought.

Havelock Ellis.

O sometimes gleams upon my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal Right;
And step by step since time began,
I see the steady gain of man.

Whittier.

And when the strife is fierce, and the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song.
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia!

Bishop Howe.

From step to step it wins its way
Against a world of sin:
Part of the battle-field is won,
And part is yet to win.

William G. Tarrant.

Thy kingdom come, O Lord,
Wide circling as the sun.
Fulfill of old thy word,
And make the nations one.

One in the bond of peace,
The service glad and free
Of truth and righteousness,
Of love and equity.

.

Till rise at last to span
Its firm foundations broad,
The commonwealth of man,
The city of our God.

Frederick L. Hosmer.

Mercy and truth that long are missed,
Now joyously are met;
Sweet peace and righteousness have kissed,
And hand in hand are set.

Truth from the earth, like to a flower,
Shall bud and blossom then,
And justice from her heavenly bower
Look down on mortal men.

John Milton.

When knowledge, hand in hand with peace,
Shall walk the earth abroad—
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God.

Frederick L. Hosmer.

Hail the glorious golden city
Pictured by the seers of old!
Everlasting light shines o'er it,
Wondrous tales of it are told:
Only righteous men and women
Dwell within its gleaming wall;
Wrong is banished from its borders,
Justice reigns supreme o'er all.

Felix Adler.

Hark, how from men whose lives are held
More cheap than merchandise,
From women struggling sore for bread,
From little children's cries,
There swells the sobbing human plaint
That bids thy walls arise.

Give us, O God, the strength to build
The city that hath stood
Too long a dream, whose walls are love,
Whose ways are brotherhood,

And where the sun that shineth is
God's grace for human good.

W. Russell Bowie.

Not throned above the skies,
Not golden walled afar,
But where Christ's two or three
In his name gathered are,
Be in the midst of them
God's own Jerusalem!

Francis Turner Palgrave.

O beautiful for patriot's dream
That sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!

Katherine Lee Bates.

Some of these hymns have a very modern ring; and yet their basic idea goes back very far in the world's best recorded thought. All the better if it is spoken in the phrase of modern life.

Their visions of better times for the human race in the world, pictured with such reality of conviction, seem humanly plausible. There are all sorts of agencies busy. What we call science is a wonderfully good, if a sometimes pert, servant of God; its freeing man from the old fears that used to bedevil his life, from the terrible plagues and famines, from the grinding toil that blinds the mind and deadens the spirit—all this is something. Now, with the new

freedom and leisure and power that man is getting, the hymn-book thinks, he has most to fear and guard against himself; he must have purity of heart and humility of spirit and good will toward man. To quote from Kipling's hymn:

> The tumult and the shouting dies;
> The captains and the kings depart;
> Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
> An humble and a contrite heart.
> Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget,—lest we forget.

As to the life after death, the hymn-book is triumphantly certain. Strangely at the darkest point of human experience, the contemplation of death and decay, the hymns grow most sanguine.

> It is not death to bear
> The wrench that sets us free
> From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
> Of boundless liberty.
>
> It is not death to fling
> Aside this sinful dust,
> And rise on strong exultant wing
> To live among the just.

This life at best is very short.

> Our years are like the shadows
> On sunny hills that lie,

As grasses of the meadow
That blossom but to die;
A sleep, a dream, a story
By strangers quickly told,
An unremaining glory
Of things that soon are old.

And death for the just is but going to a happy and permanent home.

There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

But the City of God which the hymns predict will rise in the earth as the climax of human welfare and felicity is, they say, only the earthly counterpart of the celestial City of God.

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest!
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and soul oppressed:
I know not, O I know not
What joys await us there,
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.

For thee, O dear, dear, country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep,

For very love beholding
Thy happy name, they weep.

.

O Mother dear, Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbor of the saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

The most familiar figure portraying the ultimate destiny of the human soul is that of singing praises to God with the accompaniment of harps around the throne in the holy city. It is an attempt to picture the ultimate height of duty achieved and therefore the ultimate height of felicity.

Ten thousand times ten thousand
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light:

'T is finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;

Fling open wide the gates of gold,
And let the victors in.

What rush of alleluias
Fills all the earth and sky!
What ringing of a thousand harps
Bespeaks the triumph nigh!

Henry Alford.

From every clime and kindred
And nations from afar,
As serried ranks returning home
In triumph from a war,
I heard the saints upraising,
The myriad hosts among,
In praise of him who dies and lives
Their one glad triumph song.

G. Thring.

To thee all angels cry aloud;
The heavens and all the powers therein;
To thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry.

This trope of singing hymns has been since misty ancient times the most acceptable symbol that poets could find of the idea. But a symbol is no more than a symbol. The too literal mind is sure to find trouble with the figure; yet there is great call to thought in it. The harp means music, and that implies sweetness, harmony, order—diversity becoming higher unity. Human souls in concord with celestial harps will be as notes in divine music, each

itself, and all a perfect unity, a harmony of praise. Praise. It seems safe to say that from the time when one of mankind first looked up with a gleam of intelligence in his eyes, this matter of ascribing *worthship* has been an important concern of his life; according to the records, it has occupied much of the time and attention of various peoples—it is in most languages the first syllable of recorded thought. And it has doubtless been one of man's most practically useful occupations.

For praise is looking up with admiration and love to an ideal. It is prizing superior might, intellect, or beauty. It is a contemplation of perfection, or of the best ascertained idea of perfection, with a firing of the emotion to delight and acclamation, and a stirring of the will to approach, to emulate, and to find union with that perfection. Contemplation calls the ideal Truth. The will names it Duty. The emotion calls it Beauty as the high object of its delight.

And the use of praise—the practical effect of this contemplation and acclamation of what is higher, this finding of something to raise the eyes unto, to wonder at, and to rise toward—has been to furnish a desirable end to otherwise confused and divergent trails of life, to raise a unifying standard, and to give to mankind a common view of what Plato calls "the road of their longing and the quality of their souls."

Contemplation of higher perfection with love and

delight, that is praise, and that is what the hymnal images as the highest employment of the soul; and that is the heart of the hymn-book.

The symbol of praise in the form of song looks especially toward emotion which man puts into melody of tone and rhythm. Song is the blossoming of emotion. Here the whole is typified by its flower, joy in the contemplation of all-pervading Good raising the voice into lyric beauty. Significant, too, is the detail picturing the lyric acclaim as being also choric. This is a most social and catholic figure conceiving souls at the highest employment and in joyful concord.

The details of the figures, gold and precious stones, white garments, palms, and crowns, have been dimmed by custom; yet they have thrilled people for ages, and are still to sensitive imaginations full of richness and splendor of meaning. The hymn means by jewels, doubtless, freedom from all conceivable poverty; by white garments, the cleanness which humanity really has in mind for itself and longs for; by palms, the triumph of the soul's faculties; by crowns, the hope of the earth toward which democracy is stretching its hands—the hope that every man shall be free, absolute rightful monarch of his own being, respecting his neighbor's kingship as his own—a divine democracy where all are crowned royalty. This is not the citizenry of old begging friars and anemic clerks that the young cavalier feared to find in heaven; the lowest of this citizenry is grander than all medieval

knights and ladies and kings and queens whatsoever. And the holy city is no outpost, but the capital center of all might, holy benevolence, spotless grace, and immortal joy.

These dreams and visions of the hymn-book are so plausible and beautiful that unlettered folk take them as words of truth and hope, and hold them always in their memory; yet there is no mind so strong of wing that it is not challenged by these songs to soar to heights beyond its reach. The harmony of the hymnal voices, too, is symbolic of the harmony it would foster among men. In the hymn-book the parties, the Anglicans, Baptists, Unitarians, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Eastern Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and some members of no church, are together in deep accord. Its greatest contributor is a Jewish king. Augustine, Bernard of Cluny, Isaac Watts, and John Mason Neale were far apart in time and circumstance, but very near together in "Te Deum Laudamus," "Urbs Beata Hierusalem," "Jesus Shall Reign," and "Jerusalem the Golden." Wesley and Toplady did not agree in some dogmas; but they sing with wonderful harmony in "Rock of Ages" and "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Newman the Roman Catholic and Mrs. Adams the Unitarian were far apart in circumstance but near together in "Lead, Kindly Light" and "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther are side by side in sweet accord when they sing songs of prayer and praise to God. The hymn-book is a great book for faith, hope, and

charity—and especially for charity, the greatest of these.

Now to summarize the teachings of this elect book of lyric poetry—this popular lyric manual of philosophy, ethics, and esthetics—about the beginning and end of all things: The beginning and end is God, and God is infinitely good, and the universe is therefore ordered and safe. He images forth his nature and will in the spheres that move to music and in the harmonies of a wind-flower beside the road; but above all other images of Him is man himself. And man, says the hymn-book, has the duty of fulfilling the will of God concerning him. But he is so God-like as to be free. He may go right or wrong, toward death and destruction or toward life and endless freedom and felicity.

This is the body of the hymn-book. Its terse and apt injunctions to duty, its harmonious phrases speaking calmness of mind and steadiness of purpose, its gentle and graceful verses winning folk to peace and charity with their neighbors, its prayer for all sorts and conditions of men as brothers, its stern warnings, its ringing calls to uprightness and purity of life, its sweet rhythms of consolation and hope—all these things, sung by mothers to their children, learned, as our fine English idiom says, by heart, illuminated and colored by memorable airs and by recollections of scenes familiar and dear, hallowed often with memories of solemn and exalted experiences—make the hymn an invaluable force for good, and an ever-fresh inspiration to grace and comeliness of life.

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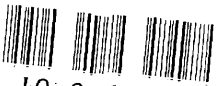
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